







# **Sketches in Russia.**

BY

**F. MORRISON, M.A., LL.B.**

*OF THE INNER TEMPLE BARRISTER-AT-LAW.*

(A RAMBLING VICTORIAN.)

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## P R E F A C E.



sketches are the result of notes taken during a tour in  
ia in the Winter of 1883. They are offered to the public  
eir present form by the very kind permission of Messrs.  
pn and Mackinnon. The writer has endeavoured to set  
what he heard and saw on the spot for himself. It  
oped that this little book may do something to increase  
fantly the stock of information about one of the most  
esting countries in the world, a country which is compara-  
little known and hence imperfectly understood.

ELBOURNE, *December, 1885.*



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# SKETCHES IN RUSSIA.

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## CROSSING THE RUSSIAN FRONTIER.

THE traveller who means to go to Russia has two principal obstacles to surmount. The first is to get into the country and the second is to be allowed to get out of it when he has had enough of it. Sometimes, if he has bad luck, both of these feats are hard to accomplish. The ceremonies incidental to an entry into Russia, described here, constitute an ordinary sample of what occurs. At the same time many cases far more irksome and annoying have been recently reported.

A slight difficulty meets the traveller new to Russia at the very beginning, for to convey to a railway clerk that you want a ticket for Podowolscozyszka is a feat not to be successfully performed without much preliminary practice in articulation. This name distinguishes and adorns the spot—it cannot be called even a village—where the railway line from Lemberg,

Austrian Poland, crosses the Russian frontier. From the great increase of the grain-carrying trade in recent years, this has become one of the most important of the railway routes which bind Russia—it would seem almost against her will—to the rest of Europe. Owing to the consequent amount of commercial travelling on this line, the fiscal and police precautions are more stringently enforced on it than on any others.

Our train leaves Lemberg at ten o'clock at night. The temperature is about 10 degs. below zero, but the carriages are kept warm enough to pass the night very comfortably. On looking out next morning, while the train still goes steadily along, the view is an extraordinary one—boundless plains of snow, like a soft, white sea, as far as the eye can reach right away to the horizon, where a mist rises against the pale-blue sky. Now and then there is a railway station, standing alone in the white waste, without a village or sign



of habitation in sight. Perhaps we see a solitary sledge skimming briskly along to deposit a passenger, wrapped to his eyes in furs; he has probably driven a distance of twenty miles from the nearest town to join us. Even the most careless and unimpressible traveller cannot avoid having a feeling of its silence and vastness borne in upon him the first time he traverses this great plain of Eastern Europe. The vision is strained to try and descry mountains, which it is felt somehow *should* shut in the view, if one could see far enough. Soon a whistle indicates that the train is approaching the frontier station. The Rubicon is crossed in the shape of a frozen stream, not larger than a good-sized ditch, and we are now in the Empire of the Czars. We might travel on in a straight line at our present rate of speed for days and days, and still be within the confines of that enormous power.

On arriving at the frontier station everything and everyone is turned out of the carriages. Let an incautious stranger ~~show~~ even that the pocket of his ulster coat bulges suspiciously, and the garment is politely carried in for him, that its contents may be examined. Russian authority is present on the platform in the shape of tall officers in grey and green uniform—green being the official colour for civil servants throughout the Empire—and the familiar double eagle device on their caps. The Russian train waits on the other side of the station to take along those who may be considered worthy to proceed by it. The first thing is examination of passports. Passengers are motioned along a passage, at the end of which is a barrier which no one can pass without handing up his passport. This document is impartially exacted from every one—from the countess clad in priceless furs to the odoriferous *moujik* (peasant) in his sheepskin. However, even armed with the necessary passport, there is always a spice of excitement as to whether its bearer will be allowed to continue his journey. For instance, a Consul may have forgotten to put a date to one of the *visas* (verifications), the features of the most innocent individual may bear an unfortunately close resemblance to those of some ferocious Nihilist who is “wanted” by the police, or the colour of a man’s necktie may proclaim him a member of some pernicious revolutionary society of whose existence he is ignorant. Cases of detention have really occurred not long since, for these and similar reasons.

While the passports are taken into a private room to be

scrutinised, passengers go to spend a pleasant half-hour in superintending the examination of their baggage. But it must not be supposed that this is the off-hand examination of the ordinary Continental custom-house, where all that is needful is to present a clean bill on the score of tobacco. Here, in Russia, the great point is to prove that one's belongings are not tainted by the "accursed thing," and that is—literature, in any shape or form. People who have run the gauntlet of a frontier examination before, carefully "compose" (as the word goes) their effects. As may be guessed this consists in sedulously concealing any books or pamphlets (these last considered specially dangerous), by unoffending articles of apparel; in having no old letters lying about in bags or boxes; and above all no newspapers. Not long ago an Englishman had hastily thrown into his travelling bag a pair of boots wrapped in an old copy of *The Times*; the parcel was seized, and the dangerous broadsheet summarily confiscated. In our case, by an energetic knead of official knuckles into an open portmanteau, hard substances, proving as we guiltily know to be books, are discovered.

It may interest literary readers to learn what were some of the works supposed to sow poison-instilling seeds in the Slavonic mind. "Gautier's *Travels in Russia*," written full twenty years ago; Tissot's brilliant "*La Russie et les Russes*," a "*History of Russia*," and, most extraordinary of all, Mark Twain's "*Tom Sawyer*," are at once confiscated. The last-named is evidently supposed to be of immoral tendencies, and the only facts which could possibly warrant such a conclusion are that it is a yellow-back, with picture boards representing a boy with a spear, dressed as a savage. We only succeed in rescuing a valuable architectural work, after a long struggle, owing to the difficulty of persuading our censor that ground-plans of Gothic cathedrals (that of Cologne was singled out) are not strategical maps of fortifications. A tourist's map of Constantinople is taken, but a Turkish Grammar is left, and so on—through guide-books and Tauchnitz editions—food considered too strong for the Russian intellect is taken to be destroyed. All books are examined by a Literary Censor, who is as indispensable an adjunct to all frontier railway stations as a signalman or porter. He is an official who usually possesses eminent disqualifications for his post; he is ignorant of all languages except his own, and very

few foreign travellers ever possess a single work in Russian to come under his critical supervision. The whole thing is really farcical in the extreme. It may seem less so, however, when we remember that in Russia, Mill's "Political Economy" is only allowed to be published with the omission of one of its books; that much of Carlyle is absolutely interdicted; that Kinglake's "Crimean War" has some thousand pages cut out; and that M'Carthy's "History of Our Own Times," has been butchered considerably. It is only fair to say that, however distasteful much of this care of an autocratic paternal government may be to him, a traveller meets with unvarying courtesy from Russian officials. The administrators are far pleasanter than the system they must administrate.

At last we have the satisfaction of seeing our boxes closed, and take our seats in the Russian train. A guard comes into the long carriage with an armful of passports, and calls out loudly the names of the possessors, handing them to those who are thereby considered fit persons to enter the country. Those whose passports are not returned to them can go back whence they came or stay where they are; go on they cannot. But a traveller need not sit wringing his hands in despair if his credentials are insufficient or assailable. If he knows his "line," he has immediate recourse to the chief, or rather only, hotelkeeper of the village, who is almost always a Jew, and is always the factotum of the place. Having found him it is merely a matter of more or fewer roubles. You can write to headquarters for a fresh regular passport; this takes some days, during which you have to live with him on starvation fare at starvation prices, or you can pay him the money down. Then, either by means of a forged passport, or more usually by "squaring" the officials, your unscrupulous friend will "pull you through" into the precincts of "Holy Russia." Commercial travellers, at least, whose time is their employers' money, have no choice, and are compelled to adopt the immediate, if less moral, way out of their difficulty. These false-passport-mongers do an immensely lucrative trade, in spite of a severe punishment, and the numerous convictions obtained against them. Their crime is a great one in a country with the police system of Russia, but if the risk is high so is the pay.

At last the train moves off, with cautious slowness, over the fields, which are covered with snow eight months of the year, and stops every hour or so for ten minutes to let us get out to

drink tea. A Russian never travels in a hurry. A frequent saying is, "What does it matter whether we arrive at Moscow to-morrow or the day after?" As we try to puzzle out the long names of the stations in the monumental Slavonic letters, we wonder whether some political prophets of the present day are on the right track, and whether it will really be a long time before we shall see a notice out there on the platform, "Passengers for the Calcutta line change here."



## KIEFF.

THE world is wide enough to contain very many places, and accordingly even very well-educated people, who have not pored over an atlas for some years, may have possibly forgotten that Kieff is situated in the south-west of Russia, on the great River Dnieper. It is one of the most important towns in Russia, and one of the most ancient in Europe. Kieff is now the capital of the part called Little Russia, and still retains the title which was given to it at its foundation, nearly 1000 years ago—the mother of Russian towns. Owing to the sacredness of its sixty churches and its famous monastery, Kieff is also called the Jerusalem of Russia. Hordes of pilgrims flock to it every year from all parts of the empire—from Archangel, on the frozen White Sea, and from Astrakhan, on the Caspian. About 200,000 pilgrims come here annually. Each one brings an offering with him, so the Russian Church does a good business in this its greatest Lavra or monastery. The Lavra deals largely in miraculous cures, and relics of saints. The cures and the relics are, doubtless, equally genuine. The pilgrims arrive in the summer time. Many, fatigued with their journey, only come to die. It is not unusual for a man to arrive who has had a journey of a year on foot. He has supported himself by begging or stealing from the people all along his route. It is only in Kieff that you can realise how much low superstition goes by the name of religion in Russia.

When I visited Kieff, however, its holy character was not very prominent, as the city was wholly given up to commerce instead of to the devotions of the pilgrims. This was at the time of the great three weeks' annual fair. This fair is called the "Contracts," because then the neighbouring landed proprietors and farmers crowd into the city to make the contracts for the sale of produce from their rich estates; merchants meet to exchange the products of East and West; machinery, chiefly agricultural, is bought; and houses and lands are let for the ensuing year. This fair is, therefore, the best time of the year

for seeing all classes of people in this, one of the most Russian of Russian towns. There is a perfect carnival of business during the day, and a carnival of amusement after the rather short business hours. After applying at hotel after hotel, only to be told there is no room in the inn, I find quarters at last in a huge place—the Hotel Bellevue. There is nothing particularly Russian about the Hotel Bellevue, and it would not look out of place at Ramsgate or Queenscliff. But nowadays such a thing as any local characteristic colour is not to be found in large hotels in any European country. They are all exactly the same, even in their methods of extortion. The way in which all travellers in any country of Europe submit to the same extortions in the same directions, and almost to the same amount, shows that Continental hotelkeepers must be of opinion that, after all, there is a great deal of sameness in human nature. Of course, at this time, one is prepared to pay a high price for a poor room. We are in Russia, so before the baggage is deposited, and I am allowed to sign my name in the hotel book, something further is needful. “Your credentials, monsieur,” says the waiter, and I give up my passport, so that both it and myself may be at once registered and described at the nearest police office.

Kieff has about 130,000 inhabitants. It is about the prettiest town in Russia. Everything has a bright prosperous look, and there is a great deal of new building going on. I see a very large new church, with its great domes just being roofed in, as if there were not enough of churches here already. In the more aristocratic quarters—the nests of officialdom—the houses are neat villas of red brick, standing in their own gardens. In other cities, as a rule, the houses are stucco or wood.

The first impression of Kieff is that it is built on hills. This would not seem a very startling peculiarity anywhere else, but after the eye has been accustomed for some time to the level, sea-like plains of Russia, the steep rises of the streets of Kieff appear like mountainous slopes. Size is only a relative idea. The Australian bush boy, on his first sight of the sea and Sydney Harbour, exclaimed, “What a blessed big waterhole;” and in like manner, the old Russians, who had hardly ever seen any undulation higher than a mere mound, called their city “Kieff,” “the mountain.” The town is divided into three parts, more unlike each other than as many different cities. There is

the new town, the commercial and Jewish town near the river, and, on an elevated plateau ending in two hills commanding the river, the religious town, with its groups of monasteries and churches. It is to see the sights of this last that every traveller first hastens. I soon made a bargain with one of the numerous *isvostchiks* (sledge drivers) in front of the hotel, and we started off at a brisk pace over the frozen street, which, owing to the accumulated ice and snow, is about three feet above its summer level. From this it is easy to realise what a horrid time it is in Russia when the snow melts with extraordinary rapidity. There is no tariff for sledges in Russia, and you can drive in a well-appointed sledge, with a warm fur rug to cover you, for 1s. per hour. We skim along the one broad street of Kieff. Except for the Slavonic letters and quaint picture signboards over the shops we might be in Paris or London; there is a steam tramway even in the middle of the street. All at once I see something else to remind me of more familiar scenes. I allude to that beautiful female form which never deserts the lonely traveller on his wanderings, wherever the art of bill-sticking is known, and will surely be waiting for him when he reaches the South Pole, stuck on to the rocks as a proof of Yankee enterprise. There on a blank wall of vantage is the well-known picture of the lady who, with graceful and elegant mien, presides at one of Singer's sewing machines, which are emphatically stated in good old English (much use it is here!) to "be the best." The fair machinist seems to find herself as much at home here as on the street hoardings of Calcutta or Melbourne. The sledge has now turned up a steep hill, but this makes no difference in the speed of a spirited Russian horse. The driver could not use a whip even if he needed it, as all the *isvostchiks* drive with both hands.

Arrived at the top, suddenly the entrancing view bursts on you of the group of churches and monasteries of the religious town—a magnificent mass of clusters of burnished-golden and blue star-spangled domes and many-coloured campaniles standing out against the sky. A more striking sight can hardly be imagined than all this blaze of brightness and colour standing up out of the white ground of dazzling snow. The extent and splendour of this religious town, with its monastery fortified like a citadel, is entirely typical of Russia. No one will ever understand Russian policy or Russian life who does not make allowance for the great predominance of religion in them, even if of

a low sort. All statecraft is, so to speak, steeped in religion. The language of many State papers is a model of unctuous dishonesty. For instance, to most of her wars Russia has endeavoured to give the character of holy crusades. For this reason alone churches in Russia are interesting to the unprejudiced or "intelligent foreigner."

Here the most celebrated and revered church is the famous St. Sophia. It was built over 800 years ago by the great monarch Yaroslaf, the Charlemagne of the north. On the spot where it is built, and all around, formerly stood the altars of the old Pagan Slavonic idols. The first sight of the church is very striking; its sixteen glistening gold domes and cupolas appear framed in the great arch of the entrance gate. It is surrounded by splendid trees a century old, now gaunt and stiff with frost. I brush with difficulty past the usual crowd of beggars selling sacred pictures, images, amulets, and other inexpensive objects of devotion. One of the beggars is a sight disgusting indeed, but interesting from its rarity in Europe. He is a genuine, undoubted leper, with four sickening stumps instead of limbs. A short, planked path, with snow piled up a yard high on each side, leads to the church door, which is only opened after a long knocking. Worshippers are scarce; it is evident temperature below freezing point does not conduce to warmth of devotion in Kieff. A pope (priest) leads me into the church. The interior has something very novel and picturesque about it. Without giving a detailed description, the general appearance is a mixture of a cave and a Gothic cathedral. The bright sunshine outside, as it comes through the small windows high up in the great cupola, seems to become diluted into the grey light of an early dawn. Gradually, through the incense-scented gloom, the eye distinguishes the forest of huge pillars; these have the uncouth forms of kings and saints painted on them in bright colours on a gold ground. The Iconostasis, or screen for pictures, which separates the choir from the nave, is always the richest part of a Russian church. Here it is ten feet high and eight feet broad, all of solid silver, richly studded with precious stones of various colours, and the light of many lamps burning sets off its jewelled figures. In spite of its having many points in common with a mosque, or a heathen temple, this old church has a solemn effect. Though it is so deserted and quiet this afternoon, it is interesting to remember that it is one of the earliest of these shrines in which has been held the worship of



the Greek faith—a faith which to-day, in Russia alone, is embraced by 50,000,000 souls.

Coming out of the church your breath is almost taken away by the shock of contact with the crisp, freezing air. You soon get used to this feeling in Russia, which is as exhilarating and pleasant in its way as a cold bath in a hot climate. A short drive leads to the church of St. Andrew, which stands out on the very edge of a high hill, overlooking the Dnieper. From the terrace round this church there is a magnificent view. There is not even a solitary priest or caretaker here, and I force an entry by climbing over the fence, and gain the spot where St. Andrew founded Christianity in Russia centuries ago. In Dean Stanley's words:—"Up the course of that river (the Dnieper) came Andrew, the apostle of Greece, the apostle of Scythia; and as he rose in the morning and saw the heights of Kieff, on which he planted the first cross, he said, 'See you those hills? For on those hills shall hereafter shine forth the grace of God. There shall be a great city, and God shall cause many churches to rise within it.'"

Standing here by the church of St. Andrew, one can see that the latter part, at any rate, of his quaint prophecy has been abundantly fulfilled. In his day the boundless vista of endless plains beyond the river must have looked very much as it does to-day; and so did the majestic river, here more than a mile broad, frozen over now, and more like an arm of a great lake. But to-day the giant stream is crossed by one of the most wonderful suspension bridges in the world—a mile and a quarter long—built, of course, by an Englishman. The opposite bank of the river is low, and a line of stunted low bushes is all that enables you to tell where the stream ends, and the frozen swamps, stretching back for leagues, begin. Right below us stretches the riverside town, an irregular mass of wooden buildings with many green domes and roofs, and red, yellow, brown, or orange painted houses, mingling in most picturesque confusion. Behind is the group of churches, with their gilt domes; and on the other side the great Lavra, or monastery. Nearer again is the capacious palace built some years ago to satisfy the passing whim of the late Empress, who never resided a single day in it. Beyond that again is the University, one of the best and largest in Russia. It is a very large building, coloured bright red—a very suitable colour too, considering the hordes of educated young Nihilists who emerge every year from

its cheerless class-rooms. It has more than 1000 students, among whom are many ladies studying medicine. At Kieff I met an intelligent and obliging young student, M. Varanoff, who told me much about the students there. A great many of them are very poor, and have a most wretched life. Many have to do all their study in the day time, as they cannot afford to use lamps or candles. Some work in factories in order to pay their fees. In a climate like Russia the chief diet of many is tea and potatoes. There are not many openings for the poor student. The employments of the State require influence to obtain. Even as doctors there are only openings in a few large towns, for in the country the people are too poor and ignorant to employ them. What wonder that, in despair, many students embrace Nihilism.

It soon gets too cold to enjoy the view, fine as it is, from this exposed point of vantage, and we next turn towards the river by a very steep hill, down which some peasants are taking large loads of wood in heavy sledges. The horse is taken out of the shafts and runs alongside, while the sledge, driven by the weight of its cargo, rushes down at a headlong pace. This arrangement is convenient enough for the woodcarter, but would hardly be relished by a vehicle painfully mounting the hill in the opposite direction and turning a sharp corner. In a few minutes we are in the thick of the maritime town, as it is called, only about twenty minutes' drive distant from the hotel and its European civilisation, yet everything around us so Asiatic that it would look more in its place a thousand miles further East. The roads are just waves of more or less liquid mud. Each street winds about in the usual Eastern way, suggesting that its makers did not look on a road so much as a means of getting anywhere, as of giving a convenient chance for erecting a row of shops on each side of an opening. The shops here do not affect the glass window and open door of European style; they are booths, open to the street. The wares displayed show we are in a spot where East meets, if it does not overpower, West. Tea and tobacco in immense quantities, the tea sewed in skin bags of all sizes; next door (except that "door" is a misnomer), a shop full of Circassian work—arms, sabres, and pistols, on the handles of which the most exquisite tracery and filagree work is lavished; then, further on, a collection of rich stuffs and silks of the brightest colours from Circassia; perfect heaps of amber, Persian carpets

of eccentric patterns and startling contrasted shades; then, hanging unsorted, a lot of unprepared Siberian furs; now and again you come to a vegetable shop, crammed with huge gourd-like growths and unfamiliar vegetables, or to a fish shop, where the fish, though exquisite in flavour, would need a specialist to name, of so many and strange varieties are they. The types of people in the streets are just as varied as these commodities, which they loiter to look at. You see women with strongly-built square frames and flat faces, dressed in grey or brown Astrakhan serge, their heads wrapped up in dark blue handkerchiefs; priests in black, with tall round black caps, and gauze veils falling down behind their shoulders; peasants with their dress of a reversed sheepskin (not too well tanned), tied at the waist with a thong of rough leather, a sheepskin cap, and leather boots reaching to the thighs; tall soldiers—Cossacks from the Don—in long, loose overcoats above a grey uniform; now and then a shorter man, every inch a Tartar, with yellow complexion, flat nose, scant beard, and bright, small, oval eyes.

The night begins to fall, and this part of the town despises lamps, and does not hesitate about robbing a stranger in the evening, so we make our way back through quieter and duller quarters of the city. Entering a telegraph office on the way, I have hardly passed the door before a loud shout reaches me, telling me to take off my hat, though I had already gone through the usually sufficient Continental salute of raising it on entering. On reaching the shouting official I hasten to apologise for unintentional rudeness. "It is not for me, sir," says the clerk; "it is for the Emperor," with an explanatory point over his shoulder to a hideously unflattering picture, in the "penny-plain twopence-coloured style," of His Majesty Alexander III. This trifling incident would not be worth mentioning were it not an interesting example of two characteristics deeply engrained in the Russian people, namely, the intense reverence—almost worship—paid to the Czar; and secondly, an idolising adoration for the mere effigy or picture—however worthless intrinsically—of any royal or sacred personage.

Reaching the hotel and entering the large room I hear a perfect babel of talk, in which almost every European tongue can be distinguished except English. This is a too significant proof of the undeniable fact that in the east of Europe English trade has been almost entirely driven out by the enterprising German. Many Germans told me in Kieff that

they could sell woven fabrics, machinery, and such articles only very little cheaper than English manufacturers. But even here competition is so keen that the small margin makes all the difference in the market. The courteous hotel manager, fearing that my Russian will not bear the strain of a prolonged conversation, assigns me a Russo-German commercial traveller for companion at dinner. His "lines" are hides and wine, but he has more amusing topics of conversation. Kieff prides itself on its select society, but he has been received everywhere. This is owing to his possession of a talent, which I am forced to agree with him is an extraordinary one. It is that when he is out at any *soirée* or party, he watches all the guests, seizes on any peculiarity of speech, manner, or attire they may show, improvises a short verse or couplet on this peculiarity, and then, regardless of the feelings of the victim, recites it to the assembled company. His being still alive shows that Russians are a long-suffering people. Like many of his countrymen, my friend thinks of emigrating to America. Before we part, I advise him that he had better judiciously refrain from the exercise of this talent there, especially at social gatherings in the more Western States. There the criticism on his poetical efforts might take the shape of a call to choose between a bowie-knife and a Derringer.

In the evening Kieff looks as bright as the rather sparse gas lamps will permit. As usual in Russia, the chief theatres disregard the national drama, and ape the taste of Paris and London. To-night the grand opera is playing "Boccaccio." The cafés are not very attractive, but do a great trade at fair time. The beer of Kieff is celebrated, and in the cafés cries of "Chelovek, butulka pivo" (waiter, a bottle of beer), and "Tchai Tchass" (bring tea quick), resound on all sides. At the cafés the Russians, with great good nature and kindness, will always welcome a stranger to their table. From my experience here, it is easy to believe that the Kievelins are justified in praising the culture and society of their city. In some things the city is very backward. For instance, the post office is a room about twenty feet square, and to buy a stamp implies literally half-an-hour's struggle among a surging mass of dirty Moujiks before you reach the counter. Kieff is also the only place out of many remote ones in the world where I have found a Bank of England note refused. The money-changer will have nothing to do with it. In his own words:—"The

Bank of England may be safe, but he knows nothing about it ; and *it* has no correspondence with *him*. The note may be good, but he would rather not have it." I find, however, the hotel people daring enough in speculation to change my note, and it is pleasant to close the evening in the assurance that the first financial institution in the world is still considered solvent, even in Kieff.



## MOSCOW.

THERE is no traveller—not even the American who boasted he had “seen” Oxford, seen it from the train—who can refrain from looking eagerly forward to his first arrival in Moscow. Everyone must wonder quietly, almost imperceptibly; a grey mist rises from the level horizon, and the colour of the snow gradually becomes deadened from a blinding white to a dull, leaden hue. The landscape is that of most of the Russian railway routes in winter, and is dreary and melancholy enough. Not a house, not a track or road, not an animal, not a tree in sight. Instead of peering out over the plains, it is more pleasant to confine the view to the interior of the well warmed and cheerily lighted railway carriage which has been our home for the last thirty hours. I soon have to begin the inevitable exchange of cards and addresses with fellow-travellers, who are varied and interesting enough. Among them are a tea merchant, partner of an English peer, who has come all the way from Tiflis; a young engineer, returned from camping out and surveying in the wilds of the Caucasus; a landed proprietor straight from Siberia, which he takes pains to convince us is not the dreadful place strangers consider it; and a young Neapolitan Greek artist, who has to journey to St. Petersburg to learn to draw badly enough to turn out devotional pictures for Greek Churches. After being locked up together for more than a day, travellers of any nation—unless, perhaps, the English—know something more about each other at the end of the journey than they did at the beginning. With Russians for railway companions one forms surprisingly close intimacies in a short time. The average Russians a stranger meets

travelling are at once very inquisitive and very talkative—if necessary, in two or three languages. They ask you all sorts of questions, which, till you get used to their ways, are slightly surprising. For example, I have been asked all these questions, and many more, almost at first sight. What is your income? What is your age? How much money do you expect to spend in Russia? Are you travelling for business or pleasure? Very likely you are a pressman? Are you married? If not, why not?—and so on. They catechise you, however, in such a good-natured, interested way that it would be churlish to show any offence, and it is only fair to say that on his side a Russian is always ready to confide to you as much as you care to hear of his personal history or private circumstances.

As we draw near the station I get a reminder that this land of snow is also a hotbed for Nihilists. We pass a cleared open space of ground of considerable size, alongside the line, among the sheds and workshops. Dropping his voice, one of my companions explains what this is. This ground is the site of a terrific mine, which the Nihilists laid for the late Emperor, Alexander II., shortly before his dastardly murder on the Neva Quay. They actually bought up the ground in order to demolish the buildings on it, and thereby ensure the more complete success of the attempt. The mine had electric wires laid ready to it and all preparations were perfect, but they blew up the wrong train, and the Emperor's passed safely. Arrived at the station, there is a scene of tremendous confusion. All the *dvorniks* (porters) are kept back by a wooden barrier from the platform; they are dressed in a leather blouse, tied at the waist, and have a huge belt across their shoulders with a number on it. They all stretch out their arms at you, gesticulate wildly, and shout at the loudest. It is only on an occasion like this that one is aware of the extraordinary sounds the Russian language can give out when it is put to it. Clinging to an hotel commissionaire, I get out of this pandemonium of porters and baggage to the large Place in front of the station. Here it is pretty much the same thing; innumerable sledges are surging about and flying round in all directions. They drive right at you, and often so skilfully that your only apparent escape from being mashed up is to jump into the nearest one. We put all baggage in a separate sledge, and give the driver the address where he is to deposit it; thanks to a happily-conceived

police regulation, there is no danger of his running away with our belongings. Each sledge-driver wears a number stamped on a steel plate in his belt ; this is his warrant for exercising his calling. He gives this up to you when he starts on a job ; and as he can only receive it back from you or lose his license, there is ample protection against a dishonest driver. I mount another sledge, and we start off at the usual breakneck pace. Russian driving is peculiar. The *isvostchik* (driver) leans far forward, stretches out his arms, and gives the horse its head, so that the reins seem alarmingly loose. In fact a London cabby would hardly survive the shock of seeing how the horses are handled here. But a Russian horse seems never to stumble, no matter what the road be ; and this road, though in Moscow itself, is a pretty severe test. We pitch along over frozen waves of snow a yard or so high, and unless a passenger were pinioned down by the apron-rug and innumerable wraps, he would constantly find himself continuing his journey on foot—or his head. When I speak of a road, the word is not to be understood literally—we are rather driving over a large tract of land, and choose our own track, coming across groups of houses here and there. Venice or Constantinople is regularly built compared to Moscow, which has been well described as not a town but a large collection of villages. Now and then the road narrows, makes an extraordinary turn, and you find yourself in an irregular square. The houses are mostly surrounded by gardens with high walls, and stand back at different distances from the open space. The area of open space is, in fact, far larger than that covered by buildings. As might be expected, with the temperature far below zero, there are very few passers by in the streets, and hardly any sledges about. At intervals a few gas-lamps throw a reddish light over the snow. As you approach the centre of the city the streets become more regular, and the houses make at least a praiseworthy attempt to dress their fronts into a straight line ; the lights become more frequent, and the animation in the streets increases till we pull up at the Hotel Duseaux, right opposite the walls of the Kremlin. It was at this hotel that occurred General Scobeleff's death, so little in keeping with much that was heroic and exemplary in his life. I am soon comfortably reading on the first of the month (here) the London papers of the 13th, for the Russians still use the old style of the calendar. If behind the time, however, here, they are not behind the times, for this, and, indeed, all large



Russian hotels are, if anything, in advance of those of the rest of Europe in comfort and accommodation.

Next morning is bright and crisp, a perfect climate. Of course, the first sight in Moscow for every traveller is the Kremlin. As is well known, the Kremlin is the true nucleus—the centre and oldest part—of Moscow. It is surrounded by high walls, and its churches and monasteries, palaces and state buildings, form a city in themselves. It is not known in what year of remote antiquity the Kremlin was first enclosed. It is at this day unique in Europe, not only in itself, but in the way in which it is regarded by all Russians. Other nations may have their revered old buildings, their Westminster Abbey or their St. Sophia, but to find a parallel to the Russian Kremlin we must go back to the Acropolis of Athens or the other Grecian cities. In the same way as to the heart of the Russian people their Emperor is not only their political ruler, but their sacred father and spiritual head, so the Kremlin is not merely the site where, until the foundation of non-Russian St. Petersburg, the old Czars and Boyars were crowned, reigned, and were buried, but it is holy and sanctified ground, consecrated in the affections of an extremely superstitious people. It is difficult for those who have not lived in the country to understand the affection of the Russian—especially of the lower classes—for the Kremlin. To the peasant and—far more important—to the soldier, of whatever distant part of the Empire, it is holy ground, and he will make any sacrifice to defend it from violation. The lower classes habitually speak of “their dear Mother Moscow of the white walls.” The Russians have given practical proof that these feelings are not mere empty sentiments. In 1812 they set fire to their city rather than let it fall intact into Napoleon’s hands. Even those who have no love for the Russians must admire the feeling of the men who would sacrifice the noble shrines which they idolised, and the city they cherished, sooner than let them be unhallowed by the possession of the unbelieving enemy. This voluntary firing of Moscow has been well said to be “the grandest sacrifice ever made to national feeling.”

About the best view of the Kremlin is to be had from one of the bridges over the river Moskwa, which runs close under its walls, and from which the whole city takes its name. The frozen stream below us makes a broad, white girdle, as it were, round the elevation of the sacred citadel, the highest ground in

the city. Looking across, nearest the river, runs the white battlemented wall that encircles the Kremlin. At intervals along the wall rise towers, generally of a red, rosy colour ; as if to make their appearance still gayer their roof is generally of green tiles. These towers are of all imaginable styles and shapes. One at the corner nearest us is like a small light-house ; farther off is one quite Chinese-looking, consisting of a series of different tapering stages, its roof coming into a diamond point with stripes of green and yellow tiles. Farther on again is one not unlike a sugar-loaf resting on a square base. Inside the wall is a terrace beautifully planted with trees, and on the plateau beyond rise the churches, monasteries, and palaces of the sacred city. The sight of these innumerable gilt domes, minarets, towers, and cupolas is bewildering in its brilliancy. Topmost of all rises the great belfry of Ivan Veliki, one of the highest towers in Europe. The longer you stay looking the more wonderful does this view become. All these shining golden domes and pointed towers of all sizes, heights, and shapes, flash and blaze in the sun. The topmost roof is always surmounted by a glittering golden cross, from which hang gold or silver chains fastened to the lower domes. In the sunny morning air these chains look like thicker sunbeams. Where the sun's rays strike on the salient angles of the domes they are concentrated into large spots of blinding white light, as if in an immense burning-glass. Sometimes a heap of yet unmelted snow sparkles in the curve of a bulbous dome. The walls of the churches below these dazzling masses of glistening gold are, if possible, whiter than the snow on which they rest. Soon your eyes become dazed, and, half-closing them, you might fancy you were looking at a multitude of huge golden bubbles, rising from a ground of alabaster whiteness, and floating into the turquoise blue of the cloudless northern sky. It is impossible by any description to exaggerate the effect of this view, which is unsurpassed in the world.

Leaving the bridge and walking towards the Kremlin you enter the very large open square called the Red Place. Although in Russian the words "red" and "beautiful" are synonymous, there is nothing particularly beautiful about this place. But, as every traveller has remarked, it may well be called red in another sense. Red with blood. Many a time its surface has been steeped and dyed with human blood, shed in massacres dignified by their perpetrators with the style of

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legal executions. It is here that the Czars Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great sacrificed the lives of thousands of their subjects who rebelled against their cruelties or opposed their innovations. As many as eighteen gallows have here been in full swing at once. It must not be supposed that in former times in Russia blood-shedding or strangling was the only means of carrying out the extreme sentence of the law. Burying alive, flogging to death, pouring molten lead down the throat, bathing alternately in iced and boiling water, flaying, and other horrible methods were freely practised.

However, any sombre recollections suggested by the Red Place are soon startled away by the apparition at one of its ends of the queerest looking building that ever amused mortal eyes. This is the Cathedral of Vassili Blajennoi, or the blessed St. Basil, built some 300 years ago by Ivan the Terrible. Dickens somewhere compares a hideous London church, with four corner towers, to an overturned beetle stretching out its legs endeavouring to get up again. This building rather suggests some stranded jelly-like sea polyp of many colours, which has thrust itself out all over into knobs and excrescences at its own sweet will. The church is the most extraordinary mass of terraces, galleries, pinnacles, small steeples, onion-shaped domes, pagodas, and Gothic windows that was ever jumbled together. The colours used are red, green, lilac, yellow, blue and other shades hardly to be found in the rainbow. Some of the domes are roofed with diamond facets like pine apples, others have smooth twisted spiral bands of the crudest colours. Perched in the air you see a sort of verandah, which could never be climbed to by any acrobat. The whole church is the design which an architect who had been studying Chinese, Gothic, and Turkish buildings at once would dream of in a dreadful nightmare. But tastes differ, and as the often-told story goes, Ivan the Terrible was so delighted with his church that on its completion he "interviewed" its Italian architect. "Do you think you can build anything still more lovely than this?" said the Czar. "Oh, yes sire," said the architect, anxious for further commissions. Ivan turned to his attendants, "Knock out the eyes of this rascal at once," he cried; "I don't want him to go anywhere else and build another church more beautiful than mine." The terrible sentence was forthwith carried out on the luckless architect, and thus the fierce appreciation of Ivan has resulted in his church being unique in

the world. Napoleon ordered his soldiers to "take away that mosque," but still the church stands to startle and amuse, if not to charm all beholders.

Close by the Church is the principal and most sacred entrance to the Kremlin. This is the Spasski or Redeemer gate, so called because there is hung in it a picture of our Saviour of great sanctity. The gate is surmounted by an elegant clock-tower in stages, and capped, not as one might expect, by the Cross, but by an image of the Russian double spread-eagle. English eyes may see something like a warning in the representation of this emblematic fowl. It is clutching the orb of the whole world in its claws. Even the Emperor himself has to uncover his head as he passes through this gate, and in former times a sentinel stood by to see that this mark of reverence was observed by everyone. If it were omitted, then the luckless offender, be he native or stranger, had to expiate his fault by fifty continuous prostrations to the picture. The passage under the gate is a long one, but even in a terrific snow-storm, when the biting wind whistles through like a hurricane-blast, I have seen everyone, gentle and simple alike, uncover the head. You are not allowed to take a dog with you under the Spasski-gate, for in Russia it is an unholy beast. I was told, and of course asked to believe, that when Napoleon refused to take his hat off passing through this gate, a sudden gust of wind did it for him. Immediately on passing the gate you see the Great Bell of Moscow lying on the ground at the foot of the belfrey tower. It will not ring, and not far away from it is the giant cannon that will not go off. The bell has a large piece broken out of it, and a man can easily pass through the fractured opening. It is twenty-six feet high and sixty-seven feet in circumference, and a dinner party to twenty people has been given under its metal roof. In Russia bell ringing and casting have been brought to great perfection. Most of the churches pride themselves on having complete sets of bells. On a Sunday morning in Moscow the air is filled with the sounds of thousands of bells, from the droning bass ones to the most silvery tinkling trebles. Their quality is so pure that they have none of the "din" or clash of English bells. Even when they ring all together their harmony is so pleasant that you do not mind, for the first time, at least, being wakened by them at six o'clock on a winter's morning. Easter Day is the field-day for the bells.

On the morning of that great feast, first, the bell in the belfrey of Ivan Veliki gives the signal to begin; then the other belfries of Moscow take up the strain. They send it on to the nearest villages. From them the sound travels on through the cold air to the next; and soon, to the most distant city in the empire, there is a sound of bells rising into the air from the whole surface of Russia.

Close to the belfry stands the famous Uspenski Sobor, or Cathedral of the Assumption, with its five gilt domes—a large one in the centre, and four smaller ones at the corners. It is at first both a surprise and a disappointment to find this, the metropolitan church of Russia, so small in size. Dean Stanley says of it, "It is in dimensions what, in the West, would be called a chapel rather than a cathedral. But it is so fraught with recollections, so teeming with worshippers, so bursting with tombs and pictures from the pavement to the cupola, that its smallness of space is forgotten in the fulness of its contents. On the platform of its nave, from Ivan the Terrible downwards to this day, the Tsars have been crowned. Along its altar-screen are deposited the most sacred pictures of Russia. High in the cupola is the chapel where, as at the summit of the Russian Church, the Russian primates were chosen. Round the walls are buried the primates of the church."

The cathedral is entered by a small porch. Here you deposit your warm galoches. You are quite sure to find them still there on leaving. I am sorry to say I have found it far safer to leave your indispensable galoches in the porch of a Russian church than your equally indispensable umbrella in the porch of an English one. Pushing through the heavy glazed door, the sight of the rich and gorgeous interior is most striking. It is easy to sympathise with some Russian Tartars, who, the first time they entered this church were so overpowered that they forgot all about their prayers and devotions, and could only stare round and cry in subdued tones, "Zoloto! Zoloto!" (gold, gold). The plan of the interior is very simple. The church is almost square; four huge pillars in the centre support the central dome, and right across, separating the sanctuaries from the nave, runs the high Iconostasis or screen. This is a perfect wall of gold, the great hanging chandeliers are of gold, the four great pillars are covered with it, and the walls are smeared with it. The jewels which form the halo for the

sacred pictures on the screen are of immense value, and all kinds—emerald, ruby, jasper, amethyst, and other gems. One emerald is worth £10,000. As the attendant priest says to me, the jewels in the tiara of yonder picture of the Virgin would make a dowry for a princess.

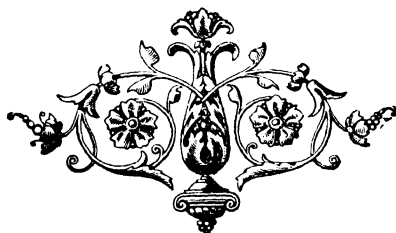
All around on the pillars and on the walls are coloured frescoes of figures of bishops, martyrs, and angels. The scale of these figures varies from four feet to ten feet in height, according to convenience of space. All of them are stiff in attitude and grim in expression, and by a *naïve* Russian conception one or two of the angels are represented bearded. These pictures are crowded on to the walls wherever there is room for them, with no regard to symmetrical arrangement. They have, accordingly, rather a grotesque effect. They seem to be marching in procession on each other's heels in dumb show along the walls, pursuing each other round the pillars, mounting to the domes, and doubling-up, trying to squeeze themselves into the concave roofs. In the corners of the church are buried the Patriarchs. Their bodies, dressed in episcopal robes encrusted with jewellery, lie in open tombs. The head is covered, but there is a small opening in the covering over the forehead, and through this you can see the original holy mummified skin, blackened, but not worn away, by the kisses of generations of worshippers. As I stand by, several devout persons press their lips against this skin, apparently without any feeling of disgust. The coronation chair of the Czars under the dome is as battered-looking, though more substantial in build, as the English chair in Westminster Abbey. At one of the side doors (inside the church) is a strange sight. Two popes, in tall round black caps and black gowns, sit behind a cedar counter selling wax candles or tapers. Every worshipper, as he enters, buys one for the price of five copecks, about a halfpenny. A brisk trade is done in this line, and the rattle of the coppers thrown into a large money-box almost drowns the voice of the deacon, who is now droning out the lessons in the old Slavonic tongue, not one word of which is understood by the people. Each worshipper lights his taper at the holy lamp, which is kept always burning, and then places it among fifty or sixty others in a large silver stand before the shrine of his favourite saint. The tapers look very effective, as they burn with a pure, steady light. This custom of lighting tapers has an interesting origin. The Russian Church has preserved the

old Greek idea of the soul being of the nature of a flame; the taper symbolizes the fact that as it burns down so does the worshipper's soul consume itself in adoration for his saint. Of course, most of the people know nothing of the reason for this usage. The poor peasant there, who instead of spending his few spare coppers on equally inflammable *vodka* (brandy) invests them in buying no less than four tapers to aid his prayers for the restoration to health of his cow, has no idea that he is exemplifying rather a pretty piece of ritualism.

Meanwhile, the service proceeds. To-day it is a specially grand one. It appears the Emperor has got nervous again, and this is an extra and (I suppose) much needed intercession for his safety. Soon the singing begins. This must have a few words to itself. The choir consists of men and boys dressed in simple black suits—no other vestments whatever. They stand in most irregular disorder in two groups, one on each side of the central or "royal" doors of the Inconostasis.

No organs or instruments are allowed in the Russian Church, and after hearing the wonderful singing it seems a pity that instrumental music has ever been introduced into sacred services. All hearers have spoken with enthusiasm of the effect produced here by the unaided human voice. The music itself is of the simplest possible character—a succession of easy intervals most richly harmonised. Good voices are sought for everywhere, and highly paid. The clear, ringing upper notes of some of the boys' voices are equalled by the inconceivable depth of the basses, which really sound like a deep rolling organ-pipe gifted with a human utterance. In singing the prayers and responses the voices often remain a long while on the same notes, but the modulation is marvellous. Beginning in a whisper so faint that it seems to come from outside the walls, the sound gradually swells in richness and power till it comes to a full close in a burst of music, which is re-echoed down from the dome, and floats through the church long after the singers' voices have ceased. The effect is enhanced by the continuous tolling outside of the great bell, set in the same musical key as the singing, and forming a foundation as it were for the whole chant. The great central doors of the screen are next thrown open, and the priest, in a gold and purple gown embroidered with pearls and precious stones, comes out, holding the Host high above his head in a silver and gold shrine in the shape of a crown. He recites a solemn prayer for the Emperor,

and then the service closes. You cannot leave without taking a last look back from the door ; and it is worth while doing so. A flood of sunlight is streaming in on to the golden screen, warming into still deeper tints the flashing blue and red of sapphire and ruby, enriching the glowing colours of the painted walls, and falling in patches of light on to the marble floor, and the orange flames of the tapers are multiplied and reflected a hundredfold by white plates of burnished silver. The effect is so splendid that it is impossible to grudge the wealth and magnificence that have been lavished upon this shrine, which is to every Russian the central spot and the very inmost heart of his country.





## IN MOSCOW.

ONE of the greatest delights for the stranger in Russia is to find himself beyond that zone of Europe blighted by circular tours and Mr. Cook's tickets. He is not in a tourist stricken country. This has several practical advantages. He is an object of some curiosity and interest to the inhabitants, and it is pleasing to find that he is not at once pounced on as a victim for extortion. When I was in Moscow in the depth of winter—to say nothing of tourists (that term which somehow no rambler considers complimentary)—there were very few travelers of any sort there. A pleasing result of this dearth of strangers was the absence of the usual Continental guide-fiend. In Moscow, if you want a guide in winter you must search for him. You need not follow Ruskin's well-known advice, "Always pay a guide—pay him well—to go away and leave you." Even if you find a guide, he is not usually that most malignantly tiresome member of the species—I mean the **one** who gives you a foretaste of the linguistic torture in store for you by the sickening assurance, "I spik English quite."

After all, the greatest sight of Moscow is Moscow. It is interesting enough to wander about aimlessly for a long time before settling down to "doing" the lions of the town systematically. Passing over the gentle undulations of Moscow from broad boulevard to straight road or curving lane, some new little habit or characteristic usage of the people is always presenting itself. You go into a shop to buy sixpence worth of goods. Cigarettes are immediately brought out, you are expected to light one, the shopman does the same, and the purchase proceeds with Eastern leisure and volubility on the part of the seller. Or you go into Lang's or Woolf's book-shop to ask for some foreign book. The bookseller often saves himself a troublesome search, by looking if the name of the volume wanted appears on the large sheet of paper, like a map, hung in the back room. This map is the "Index Expurgatorius." It tells what is forbidden fruit for Russian readers. If the book you want is on this black list the bookseller dare not even have a copy of it in his shop; if he sells it he is liable to a heavy fine and other penalties.

Then the sledge-driving in Moscow is a delight in itself. The traveller to whom this delightful mode of motion—a skating by proxy—is new, can hardly get too much of it at first. Sledges in Moscow are as plentiful as hansoms in London or gondolas in Venice. The sledge-drivers (*isvostchiks*) form a class by themselves in all large Russian towns. They always create a good impression on strangers; they are the best-natured, most obliging fellows you can meet, brimful of humour. Most of them are peasants, who come into the city in the winter, when the fields they work on the rest of the year are six feet deep in snow. They are among the best types of the Russian *moujik* or peasant. Most of the *isvostchiks*, though very small men, are wonderfully healthy and wiry; I have seen them lift surprisingly heavy weights. As a rule they have a merry expression, small blue eyes, and hair and beard which seems as if it never has or never could be clipped. Their picturesque dress consists of a long thick cloak of a dark blue colour, called a *kaftan*; this is bound at the waist by a bright red girdle, about an inch broad, which has an ornamental flower pattern stamped on it. Most of them wear a short drum-shaped cap, pulled down behind the head to the nape of the neck. Some look very strange in a flat fur skull-cap, from which hang large flaps like horses' blinkers to protect the ears and cheeks. In hiring a sledge, after picking out the one in the row with the most attractive horse, rug, and driver, you proceed, if a "new chum," to jump in. But no—the moment the driver sees you have fixed on him, he starts off at full speed for a circular spin of fifty or sixty yards to show the paces of his horse. Then he skims up to you, bringing the sledge so close that you admire his skill in not cutting off your feet with the heavy bars on which it rests. You involuntarily look down to see whether you still possess those useful members, or whether they have become so benumbed with cold that you have not noticed their loss. The drivers never omit this preliminary canter. A Russian usually gives no directions when he jumps into a sledge; his mouth is generally covered up by his fur collar or handkerchief. He pulls the driver's right arm to turn to the right, his left for a turn to the left, and for "stop!" puts his arms on the *isvostchik's* shoulders. The *ivostchiks* drive very fast, and talk to the horse more than any drivers I have ever seen. Words are of no consequence to the talkative Russian peasant, he does not mind how many he uses.

Instead of the laconic "Hip!" or "Get on!" of the English charioteer, or the "*En avant*" of the Parisian, I have often heard an isvostchik urge his horse to a spurt by a phrase of which this is an exact translation:—"Ho! my dear little horse, fly quickly from hill to hill, for the master (*Barin*) gives tea-money."

Another detail and I have done with these bright little Jehus—in the real original sense of the word. They are provokingly stupid at finding any place or address. But then they are only in the town some months of the year, they cannot read, and Moscow is more than twenty-six miles in circumference. I have been driven for an hour and a half up and down Moscow in fruitless exploration for the English church, which was only twenty minutes distant. We finally pulled up outside a conventicle which described itself as "The National New Dutch Reformed Temple." What the inside of N.N.D.R.T. was we had not the courage to find out.

But it is a very easy thing to go to the wrong church in Moscow. The field of choice is so unlimited. The number of orthodox churches in the city is put down variously at from 400 to 600. Besides these, there is an assortment of other worshipping places to suit all tastes. The toleration shown to all religions in Moscow is quite wonderful. Buddhists, Parsees, Idolators from the Tungusian Steppes are allowed to pray to anything anywhere they like. Up and down Moscow you stumble now on a mosque, now on a Jewish synagogue, again on a French Catholic church. I have seen a man in the streets carrying a dirty ragged green mat. On inquiry he turned out to be a faithful disciple of Islam coming from "noonday mosque," carrying his private praying carpet. This wide toleration is at once a pleasing and wise policy of the Russian Government. Being allowed to keep their own religious freedom, all these heterogeneous peoples are more easily brought to consider themselves as subjects of the Empire in a military and civil sense.

There is one point very significant and striking in Moscow life. That is the comparative absence of newspapers for a population of about 700,000. No special editions here, no newspaper boys with evening journals, to crowd the streets and split the ear with their cries, as in the Strand of London, or thoroughfares nearer home. You miss the frequently planted newspaper stands or kiosques of Berlin or Paris. Now and

again, in a mile's walk, you find on one of the bridges a literature booth or shed, but its contents are chiefly religious pamphlets, or lives of saints in Russian, and supposed irreproachable novels, or *brochures* in French. The two great papers here are the Russian *Moscow Gazette* and the German *Moskauer Zeitung*. The *Moscow Gazette* is edited by the one great pressman of Russia, M. Katkoff. He is, perhaps, the literary leader of the Panslavists and Old Russian Party. For outsiders the rather vague views of these enthusiastic parties may be roughly summarised thus :—All that they want is—

1. As much of the world as they can get, or care to take, for that great race, which is, of course, in their view, the coming race; that is—the Slavs at large.

2. Russia for the Russians—with its corollary—and for no one else.

Now, seeing there are about 20,000 Germans in Moscow, many of them influential and wealthy, it is not surprising that they, at least, do not relish the *Moscow Gazette's* fervid eloquence when it insists on this last point. Accordingly, there is always considerable friction between the two journals here. If one of them was in French instead of in German hands we may be sure that its editor, doubting the truth of the maxim, that "The pen is mightier than the sword," would be sorely tempted to use both. Hitherto the duels have only been wordy ones. The *Moscow Gazette* thunders or snarls at the *Nadutii Njemez* (the puffed-up German). In reply, the *Zeitung* kindly points out the number of large factories and businesses in German hands, and retorts with the really powerful argument—Where would Russian trade be if it were not for German capital, and foreign superintendence and managers? What prevents the journalistic struggle from having far-reaching consequences is this—very many of the Germans do not know Russian and only read their own paper, while the Russians read both. The Russians, who read both sides, become increasingly exasperated : the Germans, who read one, become every day more indifferent. The truth is, the great mass of the reading public is indifferent to what either paper says.

English people are apt vastly to overrate the importance of the Russian press. This is natural, for although it gives out an uncertain sound on most topics, still it is better than none at all. Of course, it is plain that in a country where a paper is not allowed to express the opinions of the people, the people in

turn will be very little influenced by the opinions of the paper. Even the most favoured papers are examined every morning by the censor before they are allowed to be published. The editorship of a Russian journal is not a very enviable position. An ill-natured censor can very soon convert the editorial chair into a stool of repentance for a too-enlightened occupant. Russians do not seem to care to have their papers with early breakfast; they are quite content if they come out in the course of the forenoon, for reading at lunch-time. Accordingly, generally between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, the editor gets the sheets returned from the censor. He is lucky if he does not see broad red strokes along the margin of his leading article. If they are there, all the parts thus branded must come out; the gap may be filled up as best it may. The only papers in Russia which really express public opinion—such as their public is—are the surreptitiously published journals.

The foreign news and telegrams in the Moscow journals are scrappy, and often inaccurate. The London *Times* reaches Moscow when it is three and a half days old; still its telegrams from Moscow generally contain much that is literally news for the Muscovites. But there is not much inducement for a paper to enlarge its foreign telegrams column. The great paper *Golos* (i.e., the "Voice," or "Vote") was suspended and suppressed, as its veteran correspondent at Constantinople told me there, on the ridiculous pretext that it embodied a liberal propaganda in its foreign telegrams. If a friend in England addresses a London *Punch* or *Standard* to Moscow, it will not be delivered to you—you must go in person to the post-office for it, and then be put through much formality and signing before you are allowed to carry away the dangerous packet.

One piece of news we saw in the Moscow papers was a weather forecast, stating that "an atmospheric depression was traversing Europe from west to east." Next day it reached us in the shape of a terrific snowstorm. It was so severe that the inhabitants, who are as used to snowstorms as Central Americans to earthquakes, grumbled considerably. But this one was worth seeing. The sight of Moscow in fine weather is never to be forgotten. The remembrance of Moscow in a snowstorm would make you shiver in the Sahara. We venture out about three in the afternoon to see the storm—and feel it. Overhead the sky is of a dirty grey colour; it looks only 300 or 400 yards above, and appears to be whirling down on the earth. Except

on the stage, in the snow scenes of sensational melodramas, I have never seen snow falling so fast and thick. The streets are almost empty. Even the poor *isvostchiks* have left their sledges, and are crouching under the iron verandahs, or behind sheltering corners. The horses are not likely to run away and face such a biting blast; their breath shows in the freezing air like the steam from an engine. The boundary between road, gutter, and footpath has been long obliterated, as you find to your cost now and then, by sinking up to the knees in the snow. The squares are covered by snow in lumpy, drifting masses. We turn to the right, and reach the Great Place in front of the theatre. A path across this is being kept clear by an army of sweepers. A few men are hurrying across here. Russians seem to despise umbrellas in any weather. They turn up their fur coat-collar, which is six or eight inches deep, so that it protects all the face, and is only left slightly open between the eyes. Meantime the cold has not been unbearable. We have been out of the wind. But wait a moment. We turn a corner. A gust of wind strikes you, taking away the breath. It finds openings in the tissue of the warmest furs, and the feeling may be compared to being pierced by a score or so of iced bayonets. An Arctic explorer might face this wind unconcernedly, but no one else can. You can understand how the fable gained belief that it is sometimes so cold in Russia that birds cannot fly. This is not true. This very moment the sound of the cawing of hundreds of crows circling round the towers of the Kremlin mingles with the whistling of the wind and the rattle of the shovels of the snow-lifters. But it is easy to believe, what is quite true, though it does not happen very often, that in Moscow the Russian sentry has sometimes been found frozen to death in his sentry-box, when the guard was changed, and that the coachman waiting late for his master at some great ball, has gone to sleep on the carriage-seat not to wake again. Struggling on against choking wind and snow, we come to the well-known *Moskoffsky Traktir* (Moscow Restaurant), and are glad to turn in for shelter, and get warmed by a good drink of tea.

Entering the large room we are in an atmosphere hot with steaming fumes of tea, warmed brandy, and tobacco smoke. If no one knows the taste of coffee till he has been in Turkey, it is equally true that no one knows what good tea is till he has had it made in Russia. Around us almost everyone is drinking

it, and the assemblage is a motley one. There are tall officers with the very large, round, but badly shaped forehead, which is such a frequent type among the military in Russia. Their dress is a dark blue coat, flaming orange epaulettes, and two or three bands of gold round the right arm. At the next table are a group of Tchinoviks (Government officials), in grey dress, with green bands on the sleeve, and military caps. Then beyond are some merchants, who still stick to the old Russian dress—a jumper tied at the waist with a leather belt, their long hair parted in the middle, and beard reaching down to the chest. Their talk is of roubles and percentages, and the quantity of tea they swallow is immense. At a side table are two popes, and it is characteristic of the Russian clergy that they are drinking—and by their demeanour it is too easy to see have drunk—not tea, but strong spirits. A large brass *samovar* (tea urn), with a small furnace under it, stands on a counter at the end of the room. In Russia the very best tea is used. They get the picked teas of the Chinese plantations; it is carried overland to Moscow. Very high prices are paid for good teas. Here the tea is served, not in cups, but in glass tumblers. It is not made at all strong (its colour is usually a light yellow), but has a wonderfully fragrant, fine taste. This is obtained\* by mixing aromatic flowers in all tea intended for the Russian market. A real Russian does not put the sugar in his tea. He puts a large lump in his mouth, holds it between his teeth, and it serves to sweeten rapidly-drained tumbler after tumbler. If Dr. Johnson, with his well-known weakness for the temperate beverage, had once gone to Russia, we may be sure that he would never have left it, and that great want of Russian students might have been supplied, a really good English-Russian dictionary. For fear it should be thought I exaggerate the tea-drinking capacities of the Muscovites, I quote a sentence from my note-book in Moscow, viz.:—"To-day, at the Traktir, sat opposite a merchant, who drank fourteen large tumblers of tea in twenty minutes." We timed him exactly, and were not surprised to see the perspiration come out on his forehead.

Leaving the Traktir the atmosphere, cold as it is outside, is almost a relief after this stewing room. It is still snowing as vigorously as ever. We walk into two or three shops, to find them empty. The shopkeeper and his assistants are drinking tea and smoking in a back room. We go to the Iljinka Street

and other commercial quarters of the city. Everywhere it is the same. This weather brings nearly all buying and selling to a standstill. Down near one of the bridges we pass a vodka shop ; it is crowded. Right opposite, on the edge of the pavement, is an image of the Virgin with the sacred lamp burning. Its light falls on the snow, mingled with that streaming from the door of the brandy saloon. Every peasant as he comes out, reeling drunk though he may be, manages to preserve his equilibrium and presence of mind sufficiently to make an obeisance to the holy image. No one omits this. This sends us home thinking that Russia is indeed the land of strange contrasts—drunkenness and piety, holiness and craftiness, Western veneer over Eastern barbarity.





## LIFE IN MOSCOW.

"DRINKING is the great delight of Russians. We cannot live without it." Such was the candid confession of the pious but honest Vladimir, the first Russian Sovereign who embraced Christianity. He was baptised about 1000 years ago, and he converted his people by making thousands of them duck themselves in the river, regardless of the state of atmospheric temperature at the time, or of any doctrinal doubts or difficulties on the part of his converts. One of the great arguments which impelled the Prince to reject Islamism in favour of Christianity was the enforced "blue ribbonism" of the former. As long as the Russian finds that he must give up his glass there is no danger of his being proselytised in any Turkish provinces he occupies. It is this deeply-rooted taste, and no great love for the truths of his Christian faith, which will keep him orthodox. I commend these facts to the notice of people who delight to muse over the civilising Christianity of Holy Russia, or who honestly believe that there is such a thing in Russia as "the great moral influence of the Greek Church." Such people exist, doubtless, but, as a rule, they do not know either Russia or her church. Vladimir's description of the habits of his subjects is true to this day. He has already been made a saint by the church he founded. It is possibly from a desire to give him the additional credit of having been a prophet that the Russians have, by centuries of hard drinking, shown that they are anxious not to belie his description of them. To all appearance Russians are the greatest, and looking to the quality of the liquors used, I must add the worst, drinkers in Europe. Statistics are of no use here, the drink is not imported, and the excise is evaded. All distilling is done on the spot, and at least half of it surreptitiously.

But if in Russia, as a whole, the habit of imbibition is general, what shall I say of Moscow? I have no wish to overrate the amount of insobriety, but I must tell what I have seen. The drunkenness of the lower orders in Moscow is simply appalling. A zealous temperance orator would have a bad time of it here. His energies would either succumb under the

tremendous weight of opposition he would have to encounter, or else he would have, by sheer force of association and example, to give up the "cause" and adopt in a mild form the habits he meant to denounce. The Troncate in Glasgow, Belleville in Paris, are centres radiating forth sobriety and total abstinence compared to Moscow. It is the same here as in the rest of the world, Saturday evening is reserved for the Saturnalia of drunkenness.

One Saturday evening I was walking along one of the streets of the *Kitai Gorod* (Chinese Town), whose name I forget, when I was suddenly brought to a standstill by one of those extraordinary buildings of which Moscow alone seems to have the patent. It is a church four stories high. It begins on the ground-floor as if it meant to be an ordinary dwelling-house, but had developed sacred aspirations as it towered towards its domed roof. Steps lead to the second story, branching off into two entrances of glazed porches, each window flanked by a snake-like twisted Corinthian pillar. The third story has windows in the square French style, and those of the fourth are like the port-holes of a man-of-war. Above this is a series of semicircular skylight windows in hideous green glass, the panes of which are cut so that the whole window looks like an opened fan. You would think that all this was sufficient eccentricity for one building, but it is not. You must increase the risk of dislocating your neck, and look still higher. Above all this is the most striking part of the building—the domes. They are five in number. In all these churches the large dome is in the centre, and is supposed to symbolically represent our Saviour, while the four smaller ones at the corners represent the four evangelists. Here, on the top of each dome, the cross stands, its base resting in the lap of the upset crescent. This again has been said to typify the victory of the Christians (*i.e.*, the Russians) over the unbelieving Mohammedan (*i.e.*, the Turk). So much for the form of this building. But, as in detailing the bits of evidence against a criminal, the worst is to come. This is its colour, or rather colours. The hues of this church of the "Wonder-worker St. Nicholas" beat outright the most startling wonder performed by the deceased and accomplished saint in his lifetime. It would make a splendid test for colour blindness. In fact, for the first minute or two, you fancy that that ailment has attacked your eyes, dazzled by the glare of perpetual snow. To reassure yourself you look down

at the pavement and across the street. It is still white. You look across to the big letters on a signboard (one of the most frequent in Moscow) opposite—" *Tchai kophe i sackar*" (tea, coffee, and sugar). They are huge characters gilt on a black ground. That is as it should be. Then, with a feeling of relief, you trust yourself to describe the colours of the church. The walls right up to the domes are of the brightest crimson pink, the pillars are picked out in green and orange, the stucco tracery above the windows is a light mauve or violet, while the window-sills in the third story are deepened to a bright-red vermilion. The roof-tiles are silver and green. Then the domes are of the richest dark indigo blue, liberally studded all over with dropsical gold blotches meant for stars. The crosses above are, of course, of gold.

This church is described to give some idea of the *bizarre*, queer appearance of many streets in Moscow. It would rivet the gaze of a bat. However, on this Saturday evening, after being rooted to the spot, fascinated by it for some minutes, I was startled by receiving, what they call in Mechanics, "the impact of a solid body." The "body" was surrounded by an atmosphere, or rather smell, of leather, fat, dirt, and drink. It was a drunken Moujik, who had cannoned up against me. Almost the same minute we noticed a woman dead-drunk in a sledge, then a few yards off a wretched old man in the same state tottered and fell on to the cold hard frozen street. For curiosity we took up our stand here for five minutes, by our watches. In that time forty-eight people, very drunk, walked or staggered past us on their way to the gate at the end of the street. This number may not seem very startling, but then, it must be remembered, we only counted for one side of the road, and we left out of consideration the people in sledges. This, too, is only the tally for one part of one street, and Moscow has, according to latest reliable information, about 1050 streets, not counting lanes. Each of these streets has a small squadron of vodka-shops.

This vodka is the favourite drink of the Russian peasant. It is a sort of a white brandy. Its taste is—but no, to a British throat it has no taste, it is just liquid fire. The moujiks drink it in good-sized tumblers or mugs; the mugs are often wooden. They never think of diluting with water, and the women can dash off their glass as briskly as the men. Russian throats must be armour-plated inside, otherwise half the

population would be killed in youth by vodka and schnapps. Fortunately, in Moscow, and indeed in Russia generally, drinking does not lead to so much crime and violence as it does in other places. The Russian peasant, always a child, when drunk simply becomes more childish. He does not stab, like the fiery Italian, he does not even bruise and beat, like the besotted English labourer (the Moujik generally beats his wife when he is sober); he falls into a state of infantile good humour, and is quite helpless and easily managed.

They have a neat way in Moscow of "running in" drunk and incapables on a winter's night, especially if it be a Saturday. At intervals the *Budotchniks*, or *Gardavoi* (police guardians) take a cart along the street, pick up all the drunken people, and drive them off to an "asylum station," where they recover sobriety at leisure. This provision does not exist simply out of sentimental grounds of kindness for errant toppers; it is for economy also. If a man falls down in a drunken sleep after leaving the tavern, and the thermometer sinks to thirty degrees below zero, or a thunderstorm comes on, the chances are he would wake—well, not in Moscow. It is cheaper to cart him to a police-house, and appropriate by way of fine any few copecks he has in his pocket, than it would be to bury him. There is another point, too, which—ludicrous though it may appear to us—is quite true, and is some excuse for the poor moujik. It was explained to me in good English, in almost the same words as I write it, by a workman in Moscow, thus:—"You see, sir, Moscow, in winter, is a very awkward city for a drunken man. His feet get so cold that he loses all feeling in them; then the streets and pavements here are very slippery from snow and ice, and so he is soon on his back."

Speaking of drunkenness naturally suggests the mention of the Russian clergy. What is told of the clergy here is true generally, and not only for Moscow. No description of—I should say, rather, no allusion to—Russian drinking would be complete without a description of those who specially distinguish themselves in this vice—that is the Popes (priests). Here the priests are, as a rule—even this rule has exceptions—the chief exponents, and not the opponents, of drunkenness. In order to avoid recurring to this unpleasant subject it will be better at once to finish all I have to say about the clergy; and

as I am sorry to repeat, a paragraph dealing with them could not come in a more suitable place than close to one dealing with insobriety.

The Russian clergy are divided into the Black and White clergy—so called because of their dress. The Black Clergy consists of monks, who, of course, are unmarried. They are the aristocratic branch of the profession. The bishops are chosen from them, and they are considerably wealthy. The White Clergy consists of the popes. They are the priests who mix most with the people, and whom the traveller most frequently meets, and it is of them I more particularly speak. The popes form the parochial and territorial priesthood. In their case Western ideas are reversed. Not only can they marry, but they must marry before they can be ordained. But in Russia when a priest becomes a widower he ceases to be a priest.

Though the popes belong to the White clergy, it must not be supposed they dress in white. Even though, like most of the Russian lower classes, they take a bath once a week (on Saturday), they are too dirty for their robes to present that colour. They dress in a grey or brown alpaca silk *soutane* or priest's smock. They are not in any way a class apart from or above the rest of the people. They are peasants among peasants. A young man becomes a pope just as he would become a blacksmith or cattle herd. The popes have their own piece of land allowed them by the village community, and till it themselves like the ordinary moujik. Their salary consists of an allowance from Government and from the village commune, the *Mir*. The only disadvantage to the enjoyment of this salary is that hardly a penny of it is ever paid, either by Government or commune. But the priest must live, and the priest must drink, and he is thrown on his own resources to raise funds therefor. As a rule he manages pretty well. His "flock" is the most easily fleeced one in the world. The Russian peasant is more superstitious than any Pagan. He is always wanting to be blessed by his priest, and he firmly believes in *roussalkas* (water-witches), evil spirits, witches with tails, and other uncanny individuals. The pope will exorcise these spirits from the *isba* (hut), whenever the moujik fancies they have taken possession of it. This service deserves a few kopecks, or their worth in vodka, from the grateful and relieved moujik. Then a final benediction, just to prevent the evil ones from coming back, is rewarded by another handful of coppers

or glass No. 2, and so on. I have seen a pope blessing a moujik. The operation consisted in a crooked stroke with the forefinger across the patient's forehead, and then four energetic prods on the chest with three coarse fingers of the priestly hand, holy words being mumbled the while.

Besides these methods for withdrawing their coppers from the faithful, or rather the credulous, there is a regular tariff for sacred rites. A baptism costs about sixty kopecks (1s. 4d.), a reduction being made for twins, or if the priest has had former employment in the family (a fact.) Marriages cost two roubles (5s.), or the present of a pig; burials about one rouble. The greater amount of this money is spent in drink. It is fortunate the pope is married. It is generally his peasant wife who keeps his house together. The priest is oftener drunk than any other man in the place. Russians take all this as a matter of course. They laugh when a stranger is shocked or surprised at the reeling pope. They have become hardened to the sight from its frequency. I am not speaking from hearsay as to clerical drunkenness, and give two instances out of scores seen. At Orel (pronounced Aryol) I have seen three or four popes staggering up the road, embracing each other for mutual support, trying their utmost to prevent their officiating vestments—knotted up in a handkerchief—from swinging out of their hands. They were evidently going to perform some function in a neighbouring town. They generally make any journey the occasion of an unusually severe drinking bout. Accordingly, at the railway buffets on the great lines you constantly see them at their worst. At Kursk Station I saw two of them. On their way along the long platform they revolved round each other in wide and eccentric orbits till they reached the second-class refreshment-room, where I followed them. In their greasy light-grey smocks, with their colourless eyes, bleared and watery with drink, their fat bloated cheeks on the usual Russian large cheek-bones, their thick lips turning a little upwards under the short straight nose, their matted hair and uncombed dirty beards, and their variegated blotched complexion, red with wine and blue with cold, they were, indeed, types to remember of the Russian pope in his lowest moments.

On Sundays, as there is usually more sacred work to be done, the priest has the chance of being more drunk than during the rest of the week. He avails himself of the chance. It is only too frequent in country places for the officiating priest to

have to stagger with uneasy steps to the altar. There, the hands which have half an hour before been too unsteady to grasp the hoe or press the spade fumble among the holy vessels used in performing the rites of the church.

I have now done with this unpleasant trait of Russian character, lay and clerical. Anyone who knows the country will admit the disgusting and deplorable extent to which it exists. I know that, as the seductive emissary and reformer Gosposcha Kirieff has told us, much has been achieved already by the temperance movement in Russia. But there is an immensity still to be done. Till sobriety has become more general it is idle to expect a moral regeneration among the people, or an increase in the respect shown to, and the influence exercised by the parochial clergy who work among the people—the popes.

To return to Moscow. The most striking feature of life in it is the immense display and luxury seen in the upper and wealthier classes. To use a phrase by which the Muscovites themselves delight to describe it, the luxury of Moscow is quite "Satrapic." You find here the same self-indulgent, lazy habits which are familiar in the East. The only difference is that the excuse or reason for them there is heat, here it is cold. All through life here it is the same—Oriental magnificence and lavishness combined with Western comfort and refinement. When Russians pay for a thing they expect to get it done in a way which would surprise our more easily contented notions. What impresses you everywhere is the amount that is done for you. Day after day in Moscow you would have to fight in any good establishment to put out your hand to open a door for yourself—a consideration in this climate. There is always a servant there to do it for you. It goes without saying that you have greatcoat and goloshes taken off and put on for you. But at a post-office you don't buy a stamp for yourself, at a railway station you don't buy your own ticket, you never reserve your own place at the theatre, and it would be an unheard-of thing at a large hotel to pay your bill yourself at the office. In shopping you expect the very smallest parcel to be sent home for you. Everywhere there are plenty of servants, who for a very small sum do all these things. In great houses there is a servant for every guest. Indeed, the surprising number of servants you see everywhere in Moscow shows that you are in a land where serfdom has not long been abolished.

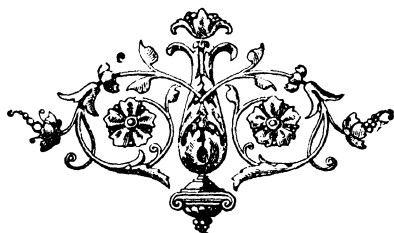
A Russian gentleman, and therefore more especially and exactly a Russian lady, will insist above all things on good waiting and service wherever they go. They have often told me that this was what they missed most in English life. In a good-natured way they laugh at English ideas of creature comfort, and always wonder why we do so much to help ourselves. Russians who have lived in first-class style both in Moscow and the West End of London tell you they feel themselves rather cramped in the indulgence of their tastes or whims in England. They say in Moscow, "You do not know what it is to be well served till you come to Russia." And this is quite true. But not only in the number of servants, but in the way they are treated, you are reminded of the times of serfdom. A Russian gentleman—and, let it be believed and remembered, a Russian lady—will beat and cuff and even kick a servant. This practical mode of admonishing domestics is common. A master or mistress will use language to their *employés* which in a more democratic country would certainly lead to their being bound over to keep the peace.

As far as I could learn in Moscow, native domestic servants get from six to eight roubles a month (about £12 a year) and their keep. German servants get more. The Russians make, undeniably, the best servants in Europe. In Moscow, the Eastern habit of preferring male servants to women largely prevails. As servants, they are civil, bright, respectful, and uniformly good natured. Irritability seems to be a quality which finds no place in the stolid, easy-going Russian peasant. In Moscow, householders are not vexed by any awkward independence or self-respect on the part of their servants. The institution of "giving notice" is hardly known to servants here. They, poor fellows, have been slaves for centuries, and they still retain much of the slave's unhesitating obedience, and also of his dog-like faithfulness to any master. They will obey any order whatever without surprise. After all, it is not much more than thirty years since they were accustomed to fulfil most extraordinary commands without grumbling. Before the emancipation, a great landowner would say to a young serf, "Sidor, would you not like to get married?" "As it pleases your nobleness," would be the reply. "Well, you'd better marry Tatiana Serghievna next Sunday." "If it so pleases my hereditary lord of high origin, I am content," would be the accommodating answer. There are fathers and mothers still living in



Moscow whose courtship was carried on in this fashion. A peculiarity which everyone has noticed in Russian servants is that they never knock at the door ; they burst in to the middle of the room, and stand with their arms straight by their sides, in the attitude of a raw recruit, awaiting your orders.

This phase of Moscow, and, indeed, of all Russian life, deserves special attention. This multitude of serving people shows how great is the indolence of the upper classes, and this indolence is in its turn encouraged by the supply of servants it demands. Dreamy laziness is one of the causes which may tend to produce so much of the unfortunately low moral—or rather immoral—tone of the upper classes in Moscow and other large cities. Of this I may have to speak hereafter.



## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF MOSCOW.

THE lazy traveller—or, to put it less bluntly, the one who conserves his physical energy—finds that in one thing, at least, Russia suits him exactly—there are no hills to climb. There is no need, in fact no chance, of painfully toiling upwards for views which are very likely to be hidden by mist when you get to the summit, as in Switzerland or Italy. A member of the Alpine Club would find life a burden in Russia; while, on the other hand, the country is surely the earthly paradise for bicycles. I did not see any of those space-annihilating vehicles in Moscow, but I believe specimens of them exist in St. Petersburg. Moscow certainly is almost undulating for a Russian town; but, after all, its ascents are so slight that they only serve to remind you that there are such things as hills in the rest of the world. After thankfully enjoying this comparative levelness for some time we acquiesced all the more cheerfully in a suggestion that we should go to the top of something or other for a general bird's-eye view of Moscow. There were hundreds of towers on which to perch for this purpose, and after much advice the belfry of the Strastni, or Passion Monastery, was fixed upon. This monastery stands in the centre of the city, near the corner of the great Sadovaya Boulevard.

Hither we started off one afternoon in first-class Moscow weather, and better cannot be wished for anywhere—exhilarating and healthy, bright and cold, without being cutting. The sky is cloudless, but has that peculiar appearance so often seen here. You seem to be looking at the blue above through a veil of almost imperceptible mist stretched right across the heavens like a very fine white gauze curtain. The air is so still that the flags and standards over the state buildings of the Kremlin hang down limp, hugging their poles as if they were ashamed of themselves. We turn to the north along a broad street flanked with fine modern houses, in the “palatial mansion” style, and soon stop before the monastery door, and pull bell. I have before remarked that we are in the land of bells, and the fact is again borne out here. This bell is merely the ordinary street-door bell of the monastery, but it

gives out a tone which makes us feel inclined to apologise for having roused it. It would be eagerly coveted by the committee of a bush Methodist chapel, and would not be despised by a fire-alarm station. Mounting the belfry stairs we see the confused lines of the iron chains by which the two octaves of bells above are rung. At the top is a platform, above which again is the bell-chamber. We mentally pray that an hour may not strike, or the monks take it into their heads to hold a service while we are up here. We have to walk with great care. On the leaden roof on which we are standing the snow has thawed, and then frozen again into a glassy surface of ice. The belfry parapet is disagreeably narrow and low, and if in looking around and below you, admiring the view, you lost your head sufficiently to prevent you keeping your feet, you might find yourself proving by an involuntary "header" that the law of gravitation works even in the coldest climates.

I know that the description of a view is to many people like the preamble to an Act of Parliament; it is not read, but "taken as read." But listen to what the Russian proverb says—"He who has not seen Moscow does not know what is beautiful." Like Rome which has ruled the Western world, like Constantinople which has ruled the Eastern world, Moscow—which all true Muscovites ardently hope and pray will yet sway both quarters of the Old Hemisphere—is situated on seven hills. Like Rome—unlike Constantinople—it is rather difficult at first to distinguish the seven hills of Moscow from any one point; but it is very easy and extremely interesting to distinguish the differing sections which mark the successive stages of growth of the wondrous city at our feet. Turning southward first, the view is magnificently closed in by the Kremlin. This section of the town is the witness of the old barbaric times, when religion and war went hand in hand. Now you see mingling the roofs of churches, arsenals, and state buildings. Within its walls are stores—of incense to aid priests in protecting their flock from spiritual enemies, and of gunpowder to enable soldiers to rout temporal foes. Beyond the girdling walls and watch-towers of the Kremlin, lies in a semi-circle the *Kitai Gorod*, or Chinese Town. It was built when the old citadel became too small to contain the increasing population. As things became more settled, and Moscow increased sufficiently to form an attractive market for foreign merchants, the Chinese Town was built and occupied as a convenient dépôt for

exchanging the wares of East and West. It is still the chief business part of the city; in it most of the banks and warehouses are situated. Why this is called the Chinese Town no one knows. Possibly for a reason similar to that for which in most Russian provincial towns the chief club, where there are no English, is, nevertheless, called the English Club. Outside the pure white walls of the *Kitai Gorod* you see the newer parts of the city, squares and circles of streets outside each other like the rings of growth of an oak. First is the *Bjeloi Gorod*, or White Town. This is the part of Moscow which resembles Berlin, Vienna, and other great European capitals; it has been almost entirely rebuilt since 1812, when the city was fired at Napoleon's approach. The White Town is the aristocratic and fashionable part of Moscow, and contains most of the large public buildings; horse tramway lines are laid in most of its streets. Outside the White Town is the *Zemlenoi Gorod*, or Earth Town, so called because it was formerly surrounded by earthen ramparts. In this part live the great mass of the population. Beyond this town are irregular outlying suburbs, growing larger and more irregular every year. It is a sort of duty to intelligently pick out these different parts of the city as you stand on the tower, but you feel it almost a task to do so. It is like parcelling off a beautiful sunset sky or a landscape into allotments, instead of enjoying the view as a whole. Here the general panorama is marvellous in its freshness and splendour.

The appearance of Moscow as seen by bird's-eye has been often compared to that of a flower garden. The comparison may be objected to as too fanciful. Fanciful or not, this is about the only illustration which will compel people who have not seen the city to realise the wild wealth of colour it displays, or, perhaps, we should say, flaunts. For a circuit of miles and miles around the roofs of the houses, covered thick with woolly-looking spotless snow, form an immense uneven white bed. Out of this white plot shoot up, singly or in clusters, to varying heights, the hundreds of spangled domes. They are of all tints—blue as cornflowers, red as poppies, green as grass. Then the gold-plated domes shine out in all imaginable shades of yellow, according to the degree of light falling on them. They vary from a dark copper orange like marigolds, or a brilliant buttercup yellow, to a pale primrose hue. Here and there, out of this brilliant carpet formed by the ground of white

roofs studded over with these blossoming domes, rise up tall stems of minarets, towers, and steeples. Many of them have a roof too steep for the snow to rest on, and their red and silver or green and white tiles glare or shimmer in the air, like the petals of a gigantic variegated flower. Everywhere all round the streets worm their way in winding white lines through the mass of houses, and the immensely broad boulevards clear a greater space for themselves, taking slow, long curves, like the course of a river. It is strange to see traffic going on busily all round beneath us without any sound or rattle and rumble of wheels rising up from it. The swift sledges below move about noiselessly; with their long, clumsy, hook-shaped shafts, they look like great black beetles with two feelers; they seem to run so easily, and the horse's motion is so free and untrammelled, that you would think the sledge pushed the horse along instead of the horse pulling the sledge. The fronts of the houses, where we can see them, are painted very often a rich brownish red, which seems the favourite colour; some are orange, some even violet. The shutter-boards of a chemist's shop opposite, which for some reason is closed this afternoon, are alternately green and yellow. I should here remark that it is a comforting sign to see a chemist's shop shut in Moscow. I have never seen a place with such an enormous number of drug-shops; they are more plentiful than barbers' or *coiffeurs*' shops in Paris, and, unfortunately, they are telling witnesses of the great unhealthiness of Moscow. This unhealthiness is not to be wondered at. Drainage is almost unknown here. The work of the scavenger is done for many months of the year by the snow and King Frost. The nose is not sensitive during a Moscow winter; it is hard enough work to prevent its being lost altogether by frost-bite. But when the time comes for the melting of the snow, half of the rubbish and garbage of Moscow is disclosed in the streets in an excellent state of preservation. All this filth makes up for lost time by doing its work in a yearly epidemic of diphtheria and typhoid, varied now and then by a turn at cholera. As we look out on the city now it seems hard to conceive that the streets and ground are ever anything but white, and that you could ever see Moscow without snow. But the thick white blanket does melt away about April, and that is the time that all Russians advise you to avoid and flee away from their country. Then for about three weeks all Russia in Europe, Moscow included, is nothing

except a more or less pestiferous swamp of muddy sludge. In summer Moscow is a dreadful place to live in, and all the families who can afford it leave it for their country villas in the environs. The summer heat is intense, and fierce winds sweep along the streets, raising clouds of dust worthy of a Central Asian desert. In summer the infant mortality in the city is at its height; this partly arises from the large quantities of fruit and vegetables which are then sold at a fatally cheap price.

Looking away to the north we can see the extraordinary Suhareff tower, painted a bluish purple. Both in itself and the name it bears this tower is extremely interesting. Next to the Kremlin it is the building in the whole of Moscow most loved by the people. The tower was erected by Peter the Great in honour of Colonel Suhareff, who, with his regiment, remained faithful to his sovereign at the time of the Streltsi revolt. It was Suhareff who gave Peter the escort which enabled him to save his life by taking refuge in the Troitza Monastery, where he remained till the danger was over. If it had not been for Suhareff's protection Peter would almost certainly have been put to death by the reckless leaders of the revolt. The Czar would have perished before he had achieved any of the exploits which gave him his title, and which brought his country forward by leaps and bounds in the race for power among other Western nations. When we weigh the indifferent abilities of most of the Romanoffs, Peter's successors, it is not too much to say that the man whose name is preserved in this eccentric monument did the greatest service—judged by its effects—that any Russian ever did for his country. If it had not been for him, and his rescue of Peter, it is very likely that to-day the rest of the world, instead of having certainly to consider, and perhaps fear the Emperor of All the Russias, and it may be of Central Asia as well, would merely be conscious that in a semi-barbarous country there existed a prince called the "Czar of Muscovy."

The Suhareff tower itself is an oblong two-storied structure. It has great verandahs running round the second story, and a high octagonal tower rising from the middle of the roof. I mention this merely because the tradition is that Peter built the tower, and had it fitted up to resemble a ship as nearly as possible. It must have been before his knowledge of naval architecture was as complete as it afterwards became. At one time an unfortunate Scotchman was "imported" to found

a school of artillery in the tower, and to lecture on mathematics and chemistry in one of its rooms. For these innocent purposes he naturally had compasses, and phials for his chemicals. This was enough, or rather too much, for Moscow intellect at the time. Like wildfire the belief spread through the city that if the practical Scot "professed" anything, it was the black art, and that he was a special emissary from and in unholy alliance with the devil. Besides he dressed in European clothes; even now in Russia they are represented as the garb of the evil one. It must be remembered that to-day even ladies of the highest social standing in St. Petersburg, and officers of the army often consult witches. Superstition is dear now, as it always has been, to the untaught Russian mind. In this year of grace 1886, if you were to interrogate a Moscow peasant about the Suhareff Tower he would tell you that books which contain the recipe for immortality are to be found in its recesses. In the same way any old crone in Moscow has stories of the sights seen in the tower in the long winter nights—goblins, fiendish creatures with big black wings, flit across the windows in a pale white light, sounds are heard like the distant baying of wolves over the snow, etc. If this is believed—and it is by thousands—in a large city, I leave readers to imagine (if they can) what superstition can rise to in remote lonely country villages. Those in search of the horrible will see they cannot do better than take the hint, and read Russian ghost stories. They are, I think, the most blood-curdling folk-lore in existence, and I am sorry space forbids my giving a few specimens. But the noises heard in the Suhareff Tower can be explained without recourse to supernatural agencies. The building is now used as a reservoir connected with the Moscow water supply. As residents in Moscow tell you, the word "supply" here is merely a bit of pleasantry on the part of the authorities, but steps are being taken to have the town better served in this matter.

Looking past the tower towards the outskirts of the city you see forests, which are receding every year as the city advances. The trees are used to build the houses which stand in their place, but still there is timbered country stretching back as far as you can see. The trees are, of course, bare now, but they grow so thick that the woods, in their winter dress, do not look gaunt or scraggy. Towards the right (the east) is the Sokolniki Park. This is a famous resort of the people, the

Regent's Park or Fitzroy Gardens of Moscow. It is here that Muscovite parents go with their children for an outing on Sunday afternoons. It is a queer sight on a fine Sunday afternoon to see the swarms of children here. They are rolled up and swathed in furs like little mummies. They run about as best they can in their hampered condition; they cannot balance themselves by their arms, for their hands are packed into tiny muffs. They seem cheerful and happy in the brisk, freezing air, with their little bead-like eyes shining out of their funny flat, fat faces. The air is perfectly thick with small toy balloons striped in different colours. To a Moscow child a balloon seems the favourite toy—what a wooden horse is to an English one.

On the other side of the town you can see the large Petroffsky Park, and just distinguish, rising above the trees, the great, cemented, round dome of one of the numberless palaces of His Imperial Majesty, who never uses them, shut up as he is most of the year in the comparative security of Gatchina. Nearer us, besides the Smolensk railway line, is the elliptical-shaped racecourse. A racing man accustomed to Epsom, Longchamps, or Flemington would smile at its smallness, and there is not even a shed on it which would answer to the description of grand stand. But here they only go in for trotting races, and the horses run round and round the course a ridiculous number of times. Fast trotting seems to be natural to every Russian horse, but it was the only good pace of any horses I saw in Russia. Walk they will not, gallop they cannot, and canter on the slippery winter roads they dare not.

Before coming down we take a last general look round. The most extraordinary thing in the view of Moscow is the extent of country seen in the middle of a great city. Land and room seem to be of no consequence. Those who laid out Moscow thoroughly realised the fact that Russia is a big, wide-stretching place, and that there was no necessity for cramping a favourite city. As a matter of fact, except in the very centre, ground in Moscow is only valuable when it faces a main street frontage, having secured that you can take as much behind it as you like for yard or garden. The waste of area is surprising. There are wide gardens, even fields, and thick shrubberies cropping up in the midst of the town among large square stores and buildings three or four stories high. Every now and then are great ponds, which no one takes the trouble to drain; they



are often more than an acre in extent. Some of the monasteries within the city boundaries have themselves fields attached to them large enough to hold a good-sized village; in fact, their straggling outbuildings and sheds do look like a small village. As far as the eye can reach towards the south you can always descry a high tower or dome; and it is instructive to note that here, as elsewhere, the Church seems to have extracted all the best sites and positions from the World. Then, the great boulevards are the broadest in Europe. There are two alleys in them for carriage traffic, and the space between is a broad strip of pretty garden planted with trees and seats, and laid out in flower-beds of elegant and fantastic shapes. These bright *parterres* are peculiar to Moscow, and in summer time they are said to look beautiful with gay flowers and foliage plants.

The air begins to get too cold at this high level, for though the sun is shining gaily all the time, in winter here the great orb seems to exist for light and not for heat. We stumble and slide down the greasy stone stairs, and find the inevitable monk waiting for us and our coin, but cannot for a moment grudge the rouble exacted for the "show" from his belfry. We have to pull at the arms of our *isvostchik* to waken him with his head buried and sunk in his warm fur-coat. After the fashion of all Russian drivers, he goes to sleep whenever we leave him standing anywhere for ten minutes. His steed, however, is more wakeful, and we skim off at a great rate. It is fortunate we do, for, owing to the spreading out of the city of which I have spoken, with slow driving in Moscow you would spend all your time simply in being conveyed from one point to another, and, like Alice in Wonderland, "have no time between whiles." We can sum up our impressions of this view easily enough. For beauty it is unrivalled. For architectural style Moscow is extraordinary; for extent it is surprising; for interest unsurpassed. Granting all this, the plan of Moscow might be described in the same way as snakes in Ireland or kangaroos in Russia. If Moscow ever had any regular geometrical plan, that plan is now where the snows are which covered the great city this time last year.

## THE POLICE AND THEIR WAYS.

As you drive along the gay Tverskaya Boulevard at Moscow your eye is caught by one of the many buildings whose great size and height are dwarfed by the handsome breadth of the street. On each side of its door is a striped black and white sentry-box; over the entrance is a great shield, on which is depicted, white on a black ground, the ferociously rampant Russian double-spread eagle. One cannot help remarking that, as a piece of drawing, the representation of the Russian national emblem is as bad artistically as can be imagined. It is portrayed as a considerably damaged bird, and its shabby half-plucked wings would seem to convey that it had just come out of a fight, in which it had at least not got the best of it. There is an excuse for criticising this effigy; it is constantly brought under your notice in Russia. Your passport is stamped over with it so as to become illegible, your luggage is branded with it, as also are those of your books and papers which escape the clutch of the censorship, and you would hardly be surprised if a proposal was made to you to stamp it on your hands and face. Russians are fond of all pictures, and specially of their eagle. Not long ago the present Emperor proposed to give new colours to some of his best regiments, and for the Pagan battered eagle to substitute on the flag the nice freshly painted likeness of the patron saint of the regiment; but the soldiers would not hear of the innovation, and begged that the battle flag which should wave over them should still be distinguished by their old eagles. The green window-blinds further show that the building we are looking at is some Government office. In reality it is the most grimly important of all the houses in Moscow, for it is no other than the great Central Police Bureau.

The police system in Russia divides itself into two branches, both of which are kept pretty busy. There is first the Police Force in the ordinary sense of the term as we know it. It

undertakes the task of apprehending and convicting delinquents who have committed the ordinary class of offences against the law, such as murder, arson, robbery, etc. But besides this branch there is the Secret Political Police. Both branches usually have their seat in the same building, and some of the officials are employed in both sections of the work. But the methods of the work are different. In Russia people are found guilty of and condemned for offences against the law in two ways—firstly, by trial before the ordinary regular tribunals; and secondly, by the mere order of the Crown. The trial by regular tribunals is a somewhat rough and ready affair. Almost anyone can be an advocate in the courts, and the advocate is paid by results. The trouble he takes with his case is only proportionate to the amount he is to be paid. This idea is said to have been imported from Western Europe. Then the Russian jury is incomprehensible beyond the nature of juries. It is always stupid, generally venal, and often absurdly credulous. The story of the Russian jury who found a prisoner “*not* guilty, with a recommendation to mercy,” is now old. But I heard in Russia of a jury at Nishni Novgorod who, though they acquitted the prisoner of the offence with which he was charged, found him guilty of another offence to which reference was made in the evidence, but with which he was not charged. But stories of the eccentricities of juries are rife in Russia.

The political police has the command of that dreadful engine of power, the “Administrative Order.” This high-sounding phrase distinguishes a proceeding which is the nearest counterpart we have in the nineteenth century to the doings of the holy Spanish Inquisition in the sixteenth. For the *auto da fe* is substituted the long misery of the march to Siberia, and a living death in its mines or on its plains. Russians do not like this branch of their Government to be much talked about, but the above comparison, if unflattering to Muscovite bureaus, is in many cases only too true. An “administrative order” is in form a short memorandum. It is signed by the head of the police who wants to use it, and usually countersigned by the secretary of the third section of the Imperial Chancery, or political state police. This last signature is affixed as a matter of course. You are told that it is often attached to blank orders, and the name of the so-called offender filled in afterwards. • An administrative order is really a Crown warrant, which arrests and sentences to whatever punishment the

Government think fit the person against whom it is directed. Such a person is arrested on mere suspicion. The suspicion may be aroused by words incautiously dropped at a dinner table, which hint that the speaker is a man holding dangerously "liberal" views. This may be followed up by the despatch of officers to search his house and the drawers of his desk; it will not be the better for him if he possesses some French work on political economy, or a German treatise which, to those who have fathomed it, is supposed to contain dangerous thought. In this way the bureau gets on the track of a man it wants. The Russian Government declares from time to time that the administrative order system is conducted with due care and without thoughtless tyranny. This may be quite true, but the efforts of the best Government in the world could not counteract the evil effects which must arise from such an inherently vicious system. To understand the inquisitorial nature of this proceeding, it must be remembered that the person condemned by administrative order undergoes no trial before any properly constituted legal tribunal. He may be questioned in a loose manner by the head of the police and an informal committee of two or three, after the manner of an extremely irregular court-martial, but even this depends simply on the whim of the officials. As a matter of fact, he is never tried properly at all; he cannot bring witnesses to clear himself, and if he appeals it is to the same officials who condemned him. The sentences inflicted by administrative order vary. Persons whom the Government particularly want to get out of the way are sent to Siberia. In fact, one of the great evils of the system is that a temptation is held out to the Government of supplanting the proper courts of the country by its own autocratic will.

In one year as many as 9000 persons have been sent to Siberia by administrative order. Their cases have thus never been subjected to the notice of any properly constituted legal tribunal whatever. It may be granted at once that among such a number there are very many criminals guilty of heinous offences against the laws, and many pests to society, and abandoned wrongdoers. But to English ideas, at least, the weak point is that these persons, bad though they may be, have not been found to be such on an adequate inquiry. The idea of Russian jurisprudence in such matters is that very strong suspicion amounts to proof. It is also equally true that

among the large herds of the political convicts annually sent by the Czar's order to the

“Horrors of his kingdom towards the North,”

are many individuals who on a proper trial would have been found guilty of no offence against the law even of Russia, not to mention that of any more enlightened country.

But the interference of the police does not always entail such dreadful results as in the cases above mentioned, though it may still be tyrannical and arbitrary enough. The care the Russian secret police takes of the people would be amusing if it were not contemptible. The police meddles with everything; it tries to keep everyone under its eye, and direct everyone's ways. For instance, a wealthy gentleman may be ordered to shut up his town house and go to his country estate, and live quietly there out of any temptation to waste his energies in the tempting sphere of Political Reform. What would Russians of to-day not give to be able to forget that an order of this sort relegated first to his country estate, and then had the effect of banishing from his country, the man of whom they are all so proud, the man who by his writing has done more to gain the sympathy of Western Europe for Russia than any Russian who ever wrote—Ivan Turgeneff! Sometimes an Order directs its victim to leave his country for some years, and then, if the Government can get it paid, he is taxed as an absentee. Many of the Russians one meets at Geneva, Baden, or in the South of France, under guise of enjoying a long foreign tour, are really living in enforced exile from their country, very likely owing to some displeasure they have excited in the official breast of the Third Section. Their properties or estates are left to look after themselves, or rather they are left in the hands of a steward who looks after himself on the spot rather than the interests of his absent *barin* (master). Sometimes a head colonel of police reports that some wealthy leader of society, male or female, “is going it too fast” (politically) in Moscow or some of the provincial towns, and he or she is forthwith summoned by a polite hint to the capital, there to be under the eye (one might almost say bullseye) of a paternal police office. Just before the last coronation at Moscow in 1883, to say nothing of a clean sweep being made of all “suspected” persons in the place, the following police order was issued: All students at Moscow University (there are 2700 of them in all)

whose homes were not in Moscow were ordered to leave their rooms or lodgings in the city, and go home to their families in the country, for the whole time of the coronation festivities. The reason of this despotic order was twofold—first to keep the students out of harm's way or the way of harming others during the ceremonies, and secondly to make so much more accommodation in Moscow houses for the flocks of strangers filling every corner of the city.

Always liable to this irksome and imperious interference of police and Government, it is not surprising that very many Russians find Russia a most delightful country to live out of. Accordingly we find that recently there were 300,000 Russian absentees, and the proportion is increasing every year so much that the Government became alarmed, and an annual tax of £15 per head on every absentee family has been proposed.

As we so often see it quoted, the administration of police in Russia really is "hopelessly corrupt." This is more especially and disgracefully true of the Political Police. The whole machinery is kept going by an odious system of bribery and espionage. Anyone, if he will, is welcome to become an amateur agent or a tool of the police. Any outsider who has picked up a piece of information likely to be of value goes with it to the police office. There he will give up his secret for a price, and only for a price which is agreed on after much haggling and mutual beating down. The widespread feeling of distrust and uneasiness which this system fosters in society can be imagined. It pays any private person to become a spy or informer on his intimate friends or casual associates. The denunciations received by the police in this way are very numerous. I give a few examples, all of which I heard of in Moscow. The student who has been dabbling in revolutionary work has been denounced by a piqued and discarded mistress; an officer has been informed on by a subaltern who has formed a grudge against him, and who hopes to have his treachery rewarded by stepping into his superior's shoes. In one case I heard of an uncle who informed against his nephew. The case was serious, and the Government took the step of confiscating the property of the culprit. Half the proceeds went to the uncle, and half to be divided amongst the police as a reward for their taking up the case.

The Government police officials usually require the fillip of a bribe to impel them to perform their legitimate duty. They

are almost compelled to do this, for their not too large salary is always in arrears by Government. On the other hand, their skilful rapacity generally succeeds in bringing in many times the amount of their salary. When salaries are paid it is in a currency so depreciated that officials have to submit to great loss if they invest in any other than Russian securities. And as I know personally from dozens of cases, the depreciated rouble causes great hardship to those who indulge in what all Russian officials are so eager to enjoy in their fortnight's annual vacation—a short trip to Berlin.

The venal views of the police with regard to their duty are soon brought home to the dweller in Moscow. If a theft is committed and you take the trouble to collect evidence towards identifying the thief, you naturally go to put your case in the hands of the police. At the office you are received, as usual in Russia, with charming politeness and abundance of glib assurances. But unless you “grease the palms” of the officials you may wait for ever before you hear anything further about your “case.” I have an instructive example of the ways of the Moscow police. A French gentleman in Moscow, a sulphur merchant, told me that one Sunday afternoon he was walking in one of the Moscow parks. It was during the Butter Week, or Carnival time, and the place was crowded with shows and theatrical booths of all kinds, and with a multitude of sight-seers. In the crush his watch was stolen. He was looking about for the thief, when a well-dressed man came up to him. “*Sudarj,*” he said, “pardon me, but I believe your watch has been stolen. If you will give me 200 roubles (about £15) and your address, you will find your watch at home to-morrow morning.” My friend was a sensible man, who knew Moscow, and knew, moreover, that he would never recover his watch by hanging about the dingy chambers and dirty ill-swept floors of the Police bureau. He knew equally well it was useless to give up his interested and extortionate informant to the police, with whom he had doubtless a secret understanding, and who would receive their due share of the reward paid for the stolen property. He got together the money, and next forenoon his watch arrived all right at his house in the Arbatskaya. I have no reason for doubting my friend's word, and these things are so usual in Moscow as to call forth no special surprise or even comment.

It must never be forgotten, however, that in Russia the police has abundance of legitimate scope for its exertions. Absurd as

it may seem this is too often forgotten by people who are apt to extend their sympathy for political prisoners and others, who are undoubtedly to be pitied, to other offenders for whom Siberia is if anything too good. From its very nature the vast Russian Empire is a fertile soil for producing a large annual yield of criminals. Out of its huge heterogeneous population you get drifted into the goals every year people who are the scum of a scum. Let us take people like the Tartars, the Kalmucks, the Cossacks, the Circassian or Caucasian mountaineers, the brigands who infest the shallow Eastern shores of the Caspian Sea, and rob the stranded ships there. Now even in their best moments the moral code of these high-spirited barbarians is not a very strict one—that is if they hold to it; when they do make up their mind to go in for wrongdoing they are apt not to stick at trifles. Thus the sight of a good steed is too great a strain on the conscience of the Russian-hating Caucasian connoisseur in horseflesh. His regard for the rights of property succumbs before his ingrained acquisitive taste in matters equine. If he can capture a horse alive he will not scruple to do so at the expense of maiming or even killing its owner. A young Russian engineer, M. Bulossowitch, with whom I travelled for several days, told me that one of the greatest difficulties his party had to contend with when surveying and camping out in the Caucasus, was the theft of their horses from camp almost under their very eyes, even though the animals had the Government mark on their cloths and bridles. Accordingly, in the Moscow prisons a large number of the robbers are horse-stealers, their offence being aggravated or not by that of manslaughter. The punishment for horse-stealing is deportation to Siberia. There are 18,000,000 horses in Russia, so that this may seem unduly severe. But without security in the possession of his horse, the peasant could not plough or cultivate his land. He would starve and then—more important still—he would not be able to pay his taxes to Government.

The prison management in Russia is very defective. The prisons are used as temporary houses of detention, and for prisoners sentenced to penal servitude. Capital punishment exists only in two cases—first, for what we should call treason and other similar political crimes; secondly (this point is peculiarly Russian) for violence threatened or offered by prisoners to officials.



Whether the rarity of capital punishment has anything to do with it or not, I leave others to decide, but certain it is that in Russia the cases of murder are of a peculiarly cold-blooded and hideous nature. Cases could be multiplied to show this, and in the remote recesses of Russia it is said that many horrible crimes—especially death caused by arson—are never detected. A very recent traveller mentions that in prison at Moscow he saw a boy of fifteen who had murdered two children for the sake of five roubles (about 13s.) The following, again, I have on the authority of an English army officer, who had travelled much in Russia. An account of the occurrence appeared in the Russian papers at the time. A number of persons had mysteriously disappeared at a small village in West Russia. The suspected house was one of those unutterably wretched hotels or bad drink shops, which need to be seen for their horrible appearance to be realised. They differ only from the other village houses in not being built of wood. The dirty walls would need a long scraping to show that they were once white; the whole place is surrounded by and steeped in filth; on the projecting roof the rotting thatch is dragged off by the weight of the sliding snow. In the place under notice, the disappearances had chiefly been those of small commercial travellers, well-to-do peddlers, and rich peasants who had fallen into a drunken sleep in the crib. It was found out at last that these people were robbed and murdered in the following extraordinary way. In a low chamber in the attics was a cleverly contrived bed. It was so constructed that when the weight of a body lying on it touched a spring, concealed under the mattress, a strong sharp spike shot up from under the pillow and transfixed the sleeper through the back of the head or throat.

I must be excused for citing one more horrible case, which is too illustrative of Russian morals and Russian obliquity of judgment to be passed over. In August, 1883, a little girl was brutally murdered in St. Petersburg. She was employed in a pawnshop kept by an ex-lieutenant-colonel of police. This gentleman had, by diligent attention to those principles of bribery and extortion of which I have spoken, amassed a fortune of 300,000 roubles. Together with another official, who had also belonged to the police force, he was afterwards found guilty as an accomplice in the crime. In 1884, a woman named Semenova voluntarily accused herself of having murdered the girl by

breaking her skull, and then placing a gag in the dead child's mouth to preserve appearances. There was no doubt of the guilt of the murderess, but at the end of last year a St. Petersburg jury acquitted her on the evidence of a Russian doctor, who declared she was "Pyschopath," a new form of malady evidently invented for the occasion. The Muscovite leech went on to explain that among other peculiarities a "Pyschopath" was a creature who, "though he could reason logically, was deprived of all moral notions," and "considered nothing sacred outside himself," and "who, in order to gratify his caprice was ready to commit any crime." It will hardly be believed that an astonished but credulous jury actually acquitted this monster on this preposterous evidence, given by Professor Balinsky. Worse still, a crowd, comprising many St. Petersburg "notables," cheered the murderess Semenova on her acquittal, and her autograph was in great request for the albums of St. Petersburg. This verdict could hardly be pleasant news for dwellers in Russia, who may have in future to console themselves for the murder of a relative or friend by the fact that the murderer was a poor harmless "Psychopath." I cite this case because it presents three characteristic circumstances to which I wish to draw attention, and which will be found in many instances of a similar nature. First, the reckless brutality of the crime, perpetrated in the greatest street in Europe—the Neffsky Prospect; secondly, the unenviable connexion of high police officials with a horrible affair; lastly, the ridiculously wild theories which in Russia are constantly jumped at as an excuse for or justification of wrongdoing.

It is characteristic of a Russian institution that it breaks down just when it is most wanted. This is startlingly true of the police prisons. With a small army at work to get criminals into custody, Russian authority cannot keep them in when it does catch them. The returns for a recent year show that the number of escaped prisoners was 1352. Many of them escaped from the medical wards. The prison accommodation is also inhumanly insufficient. In the same year 95,000 prisoners were confined in space meant to hold 75,000. Russian calculations are not over fastidious with regard to over-crowding, and it is safe to believe that the smaller number is excessive. In some cases nearly 600 prisoners were herded together where there was barely room for 200. About two

years ago publications in English magazines reflecting on the state of the Russian prisons excited much interest and many angry rejoinders in Russia. Much has been done already to ameliorate their condition by Dr. Lansdell, and through the influence of Lord Radstock and others. But there is no doubt that Russian prisons still afford a field where a philanthropist may establish the reputation of a second Howard.

Among other things about police and officials I learnt in Moscow this curious bit of Russian law. If an official has embezzled funds, or committed a default in his office, and he cares to pay back the amount so fraudulently abstracted, nothing more is said about the matter. He has to leave the service, it is true, but he need fear no prosecution or further punishment. Not long ago, M. Makoff, the Minister of Russian Posts, and M. Perilieff, Secretary of the same department, committed suicide owing to their inability to refund a large sum of money they had misappropriated.

A question hard to answer accurately is as to the extent of corporal punishment which prisoners undergo in Russia. The knout used to be in requisition for this purpose. In the army its use was abolished in 1863; but it is said a soldier who is dismissed for ill conduct still gets a few farewell strokes from it. It is still used in punishing criminals. The only day I ever had a guide in Moscow he showed me a knout kept in a police office. It was the only thing I saw that I could not have seen by myself without a guide, for, whatever may be said to the contrary, I found in Moscow that a stranger is shown almost anything he asks to see if he goes to the proper quarter. We gave a gratuity to a sergeant of 1½ roubles to see the instrument of torture. It was a stick like a broomstick, about four feet long; at its end were four thongs of leather about fifteen inches in length; these thongs were intertwined with wire, and at the end of each was a bullet of lead about one-third of an inch in diameter. The thongs are sometimes steeped in salt or vinegar to make the lashes more smarting. It was hardly pleasant to look on an instrument standing there in the corner which had probably killed a prisoner or so in its time. In former times 200 blows with the knout were supposed to be equivalent to a sentence of death. In fact, that grim executioner usually intervened and saved the flagellator the trouble of completing the tale of strokes. The Russian peasant, however, Russians assure you, never considered

the use of the knout degrading as men of other nations would. It was simply an unpleasant punishment, to be preferred as a remembrance rather than as an anticipation. The prisoner or moujik might, in fact, in reference to his flogging, use the words of Macbeth to the ghost, "Why so ; being gone I am a man again."

It seems almost ungrateful, even though it is done for the truth's sake, to allude to all these unpleasant topics in connection with the Moscow Police Bureau, for in Moscow the stranger is less troubled by police regulations than in any city in Russia. I was never even asked for my passport while I was there. The traveller is not to be envied who has other than pleasant recollections of Moscow ; he is so well treated and kindly received everywhere. In Moscow the "heave-half-a-brick-at-him," view of a stranger does not exist. The Governor of Moscow, Prince Dolgorouky, will most courteously receive any stranger who calls on him, whether provided with a letter of introduction or not. This applies to all travellers, but as they say in servant advertisements, "a preference" is given to English and French. We got orders from Prince Dolgorouky to see places shut to the general public. It is worth while remarking that by a strange coincidence Prince Dolgorouky is a descendant of the great princes of the same name who founded Moscow some 700 years ago. This affords another example of the sturdy tenacity and permanency of the great Russian families.

One last word on Russian officials is this. A fortunate compensation for the worst system of government in the world is that the manners of those who administer it are about the best. Even if you are not always going to have the full measure of everything you want meted out to you, it is surely pleasanter to have it refused with a smile than with a growl. In no public offices in Europe do you meet with so much obliging good nature as in Russian ones. Even Government clerks treat you like a fellow human being. Instead of quailing before the over-awing gruffness of a gorgeous German, or losing your temper over the supercilious indifference of the English red-tapist, in Russia you meet with a politeness in officials which has all the outside polish of the Frenchman, combined with an interest in you, and a desire to please, which is not an invariable characteristic of a Gallic civil servant. It would be ungrateful not to acknowledge this, and I believe most travellers have had a good word to say for the Russians on this point.

## HABITS AND CUSTOMS.

"There are three things which you must do in Moscow," said a Russian Prince whom we met at Tula—"see the Kremlin, see the Foundling Institution, and, above all, dine at the Hermitage." Then, with true Russian politeness, he wrote out for us a bill of fare of national dishes with bewilderingly long names. We found it a far easier task to master the *plats* themselves than the unpronounceable terms which distinguished them. No apology is required for giving a short account of Russian *cuisine*. The philosopher who said, "Tell me what people eat, and I will tell you what they are," would have abundant scope for analysing Muscovite character, from a gastronomic standpoint. In the bracing sharp air of a Moscow winter it appears to a stranger that not only is everybody hungry, but that they are always hungry. The average Moscow business-man believes so firmly in the truth of the maxim, that he must "eat to live," that he seems in danger of reversing this physiological saw. An English dinner *à la Russe* is, of course, utterly unlike any Russian dinner, as far as the comestibles are concerned.

One evening when it had been snowing all day, and a wretched grey evening set in, with a wind howling and blowing as it only can in Moscow, we drove up as fast as the opposing gusts would let us to the Hermitage Restaurant. It is a large white house in the Flower Street. As you enter the hall at the foot of the fine staircase, all thickly carpeted in scarlet, you find the usual array of liveried servants—one to pull open the doors for you, another to lift off your coat for you, another paces up and down the hall to show you with obsequious gesture the way up the stairs, which are right in front of you. You need not go to the trouble of yourself kicking off your goloshes or pulling off your felt snow-shoes; a little, flat-faced boy, wearing a long blue jacket studded over with white buttons the size of half-a-crown, and a yellow leather waist-girdle, brings you a footstool and divests you of those foot-coverings, puts them into one of about 150 pigeon-holes, and gives you a ticket for them. Strange to say, you get no ticket

for your coat—you never do in Russia. At all hotels or restaurants you leave your coat in the vestibule with fifty or sixty others in charge of the porters. These men, by almost marvellous instinct, remember the coat which belongs to each owner without putting any number or distinguishing ticket on it. It is as well they do, for to lose a greatcoat in Russia is a serious matter. And here I must make a short digression, which only those who want to understand the importance of the subject need read, about Russian furs and coats. Almost the cheapest fur-lined coat you can buy costs £10. An ordinary wearing one costs about £20, but this is not an extravagant price. I have seen many coats worn which have cost £50, and you can easily expend £200 for one with unusually fine fur. The fur most used is that of the racoon, very soft and thick, and of a brown colour. The finest of all for a coat lining is that of the fiery fox. Its fur is reddish, and very long and fine. Cloaks of the fur of the blue fox are worn by ladies. As is well known, the best part of the fur of this animal is that which grows on the soles of the paws. The fur of each sole is worth about 10s. It is not more than two inches square, so the curious or extravagant can calculate the price of a cloak composed of the precious feet of this rare little animal. To prevent disappointment to readers who wish to emulate Moscow ladies, it is as well to mention that the fur of the blue fox is not blue. It is of a grey colour when caught in summer, and white if captured in winter. But in winter, when its coat vies in whiteness with the Arctic ice floes which it inhabits, the fox is only very rarely caught. It is accordingly an object of ambition of a Muscovite leader of fashion to have her blue fox cloak as nearly white as possible. The first time you enter a Russian fur shop you are astonished by the immense variety of skins displayed. You never imagined there were as many different sorts of fur-bearing animals as the number of furs you see around you; nor in fact, are there. Any new or rare fur is prized highly, and therefore priced highly, just because of its rarity. But Russian merchants are equal to this, as to any conceivable emergency where a handsome profit may be made out of confiding customers. They sell furs—as M. Tissot has observed—under the names of animals which do not exist at all anywhere. A foreign buyer takes a fancy for a skin, and asks its name. The shopman names it as that of an animal of which not only

the purchaser but even the greatest living zoologist, has never heard. But that only shows the buyer what a valuably rare skin it is, and naturally for such a fur he pays a higher price than for that of any animal with a more hackneyed reputation. But after a month's wear and tear the dye comes off, the hair falls out, and it does not take an expert to pronounce the hitherto unheard-of fur as that of the homely and plentiful rabbit, which has been skilfully disguised by the ingenious furrier. But it is a Russian maxim, "If you don't cheat you can't trade," and fur-dealers act up to this precept better than any other class of tradesmen. They begin by asking 500 roubles for a coat for which they will take ninety in the end.

Those who have not been in Russia have no idea what an important matter your fur coat is. It is no trivial affair, health and even life depend on its protection. In Russia your social standing is gauged not so much by the company as by the coat you keep. It would have furnished Carlyle with the best of all examples for his philosophy of clothes.<sup>st</sup> Every Russian lad looks forward to having a great fur coat of his own with as much eagerness as the English boy does to having a watch of his own or growing his moustache. One of Nekrasoff's most pathetic stories is called *The Coat*. It tells how a poor timid young Tchinovik (civil servant) conceived the daring project of buying for himself a fine warm coat; how he starved and scraped and denied himself to save the necessary sum out of his niggardly Government salary; and how when his hoard was large enough to order it, and the coat was at last sent home to him on a winter's night, he was found dead, after a short illness brought on by the want of it. Two Russian gentlemen meeting in a railway carriage or anywhere else fix on their coats as convenient subjects of conversation, and strike up an acquaintance by looking at them and making remarks on them, just in the same way as two Englishmen talk about the weather. A good fur will always attract notice and criticism.

I had in Russia a very large and fine Australian opossum-rug, which constantly made us the objects of an uncomfortable amount of admiring attention. Wherever it appeared I had to answer a string of questions about the opossum. How did we hunt it, with dogs or guns? Did it bite, and was it fierce? Could it live in Russia if imported there (a most characteristically Russian question). And above all, what a tremendously large animal<sup>c</sup> it must be to have such a big skin! A volley of

such questions used often to come from a party of five or six Russian fellow-travellers before I had time to explain the modest dimensions and unobtrusive habits of the sleepy marsupial. I must mention one small hint we may take from the Russians as to wearing furs. "Would you kindly oblige me by spreading your rug over you just as you do at home?" said a friend to us one day in the railway waiting-room at Jemerinka. "I have a wager with some gentlemen here on the subject." We complied, and in a minute or two a roar of laughter showed that my friend had won his bet. "If you put an Englishman down at the North Pole with a fur covering," he said, "he would wear it with the fur outwards." Russian ladies say that they were always amused and astonished, their first London winter, to see ladies wearing their beautiful seal-skin jackets with the warm side outwards.

Travelling with an Australian rug used always, when its origin became known, to lead to questions about Australia. Of course, as might be expected, the ignorance of the country was as great as it is in England. I have been asked scores of most ridiculous questions, which I have not room to set out here. One idea I found firmly fixed in the mind of the average Russian was this. They think that in Australia we have made a "conquest" (*zavoiwanye*) of black people, and that though they are not now our slaves, we employ them in troops as servants. One of their duties was supposed to be going about holding umbrellas over us in hot weather. But the question most constantly asked was which took the longest time to go to by sea, India or Australia? It was surprising to find the vague ideas the Russians have—in view of more recent events I had better say *had*—of the relative distances to India and Australia. I have been asked this last question by many people who would be supposed to know better, often by military men, by intelligent men who spoke two or three languages, and by commercial travellers. In the last case, however, the question is not so surprising, for seeing they never know much outside it, they excuse themselves by always boasting to you that they "know Russia like their pocket." I once asked a Russian how so many people, otherwise intelligent, had their education in foreign geography so woefully neglected. I got the answer, "If you ask us about any country beyond the sea our name is *Ivan Nepomnoostchi*" (John Knownothing). In Russia there are, of course, a larger



proportion of people who have never seen the sea than in any other European country. In the engravers' or photographers' windows in Moscow a picture of a ship will attract a crowd of stagers away from the cabinet portraits of the latest French actresses and English fashionable beauties, which find their way to Moscow very quickly from the Burlington Arcade or the Avenue de l'Opéra.

But it is time to tell readers something about the Hermitage Restaurant—that is, if they do not consider the foregoing talk about furs and an allusion to the subject of eating as too undignified to merit a description. I can only say that those who have been in Russia would smile if the subjects of furs or the Hermitage were looked on as trifling ones. The Hermitage is, in its way, one of the great sights of Moscow, and indeed of Russia. Even Parisians who know it admit that it is the best establishment of its kind in Europe, and this alone would make it worthy a description. The furniture, gold plate, glass, and china in it is said to be worth nearly £50,000, and whenever these objects are sold, *bric-à-brac* hunters and collectors in Moscow will have a field day for gratifying their tastes, but a bad day for their pockets. We ascend the stairs and enter the beautiful dining-hall on the first floor. There are plenty of tables yet unoccupied, but it is not to them we first turn. In a Russian restaurant, if anyone walks into the room and straightway seats himself at a table to begin his meal, a smile goes round the assembled company; it is plain he is a “new chum.” The real Russian goes through a preparatory performance to put him in good form for his dinner. Hungry as he is, he walks up to a buffet at the side of the room, and standing there partakes of the *zakuska*, or *hors d'œuvre*, supposed to give the appetite a still keener edge. This *zakuska* is washed down with a liqueur. The first time you go up to one of these counters you really do not know which of the little dishes to choose, their number is so confusing. There are dozens of small plates on which wait to be despatched the different “relishes.” Caviare spread on small circular loaves, goose flesh raw and smoked, radishes, anchovy, stuffed crayfish, various tongues of rarely eaten creatures, pickled smelts, and numerous other appetising morsels are spread out in puzzling array. Russians always drink a glass of some spirits with the *zakuska*; they do not, as a rule, ask for any particular liquor, but generally leave it to the waiter to pour out the drink which is

then most in fashion ; for these liqueurs have their “run” just like a piece at the theatre. Their name is legion. I have counted as many as fifty different bottles of them, and you are told that there are a hundred varieties. The favourite liqueur is *alaszch* (*kümmel*) ; but, besides this, there are all the different varieties of brandies—brandy made from wheat, from red gooseberries, from chestnuts ; brandy flavoured with black currant leaves (*listofka*), brandy of cassia, of oranges, of cherries, brandy flavoured with lemons and cucumbers, etc. In fact, the most hardened liqueur drinker might here soon be converted from the habit, not from having nothing to drink, but from a paralysis of judgment caused by the embarrassing immensity of choice. The names of these *vodkas*, or liqueurs, are sometimes very strange. Pushkin, the great Russian poet, satirised the drinking of the clergy in this epitaph on a priest's grave (Leipzig edition, p. 490), which I translate :—

“ Not a tomb, but nay, a wonder !  
In the grave beside you here  
Lies a Pope a coffin under,  
And in the Pope lies wine and beer.”

By a revenge of time, Pushkin's memory is preserved by a brandy which bears his name and scalds the throats of hundreds of his imbibing countrymen, who may have never read a line of his poems. You can, if you will, drink Gortschakoff brandy, Bismarck brandy, vodka of Peter the Great, of Woronzow (a great Russian vigneron), or of Nordenskjöld. There is “Eau-de-vie à la Patti ;” and when I was in Moscow it was proposed to christen a liqueur “Sembrich,” in honour of the charming Dresden *prima donna* who was then delighting feverishly enthusiastic Moscow audiences.

In the Hermitage you find the inevitable large machinery-worked barrel organ, which is a constant piece of furniture in Moscow restaurants. Unfortunately these instruments do not play Russian national melodies, but are kept up to modern European date with airs from “La Mascotte” and waltzes by Gungl. In the smaller restaurants, where the barrel organ is proportionately smaller, you have a bad time of it if you sit too long at dinner. The instrument soon gets through its small *répertoire*, and then, conscientiously beginning again, dins its tunes a second or third time into your unwilling ears. The organ at the Hermitage cost nearly £3000. •One of the dinner services belonged to the Emperor Napoleon III., and

each plate is beautifully painted with a portrait of one of the lady beauties of his court. The candlesticks on each table are gold, and of most artistic patterns and exquisite tracery. The crystal and Venetian glasses are fit for a museum, and so are some old wooden and silver tankards of Dutch workmanship. Each table has a small flower trough filled with azaleas or camellias, and the perfume of a large magnolia in an alcove at the end of the room makes the atmosphere almost too heavy—all this in the middle of a most rigorous winter. The small green knife-rests on the table are of malachite, and some of the finger bowls stand on small round knobs of lapis lazuli. At the Hermitage the waiters are dressed in Russian fashion, and have a very striking livery—spotlessly white trousers and white blouse or jumper shirts, fastened at the waist with a bright red band or sash, to which hangs a prettily shaped yellow Russia-leather pouch, in which your “Chelovek” (waiter) carries his corks, pencils, etc. Every person has a waiter to himself, and I must again repeat what was repeated to me till I was tired of hearing it in Russia, “You English don’t know what good service is till you come to Russia.” Here certainly the waiters contrast very favourably with the “cheeky” English footman or butler, or the overworked hotel or restaurant waiters. Every wish is anticipated, and if you involuntarily wink an eye too decidedly, the waiter is at your side, civility itself, and ready to take every trouble to please you.

The only thing that takes away your appetite is to see what enormous quantities the Russians, especially the merchants, eat. They get through seven or eight dishes easily—and such dishes! Everything is very rich, and served in most liberal quantity. If you do not speak Russian, and are asked to dine with Russians in Moscow, it will be well, if you ever want to enjoy good health again after partaking of their hospitality, to master one important word of their language, “*dovolno*” enough). The chief soups are cabbage soup (*stchi*), uninviting looking, but very rich, and a cold iced soup which has meat and vegetables floating in it. A basin of this would be a meal for a Frenchman, but to the Russians it is merely a short prandial prelude. The best fish in Russia is sterlad, a kind of trout. At the Slavianski Bazar, one of the great dining places, you are somewhat surprised the first time you order sterlad. You are led up to the middle of the splendid circular room, roofed with glass, and surrounded by sculptured galleries.

Here there is a pond about twenty feet in diameter, surrounded by plants, with a rockery, and a fountain playing. In the water you can see the sterlads swimming about. You are asked to choose one. The waiter takes a stick, at the end of which is a silver gauze-wire net, and the unfortunate fish which you have doomed for your dinner is soon caught, landed, and taken away to the kitchen to be cooked. It would only tire English readers if I were to take them through the interminable courses of a real Russian meal, and were to enumerate all the dishes—the kulibiaka, or fish pasty; the celebrated Russian piroghi (patties) of onions, rice, carrots, and mushrooms; the Pojarski cutlets (named after an old lady who made a fortune by inventing them), served with every green vegetable or gourd you can think of, and many others you can not; the fine white-fleshed *riabchik*, or grouse; and then the dish which is the *pièce de résistance* for every true Muscovite, the cold boiled sucking pig; then, as a final menace to digestion; large swimming stews or gruels of all sorts of mingled fruits. The Russians who have not adopted Western ideas and taken to champagne, drink beer, or *kvass* (a sort of cross between beer and cider), of different sorts—raspberry kvass, apple kvass, pear kvass, and many others. I have seen merchants go bravely through a repast of the sort I have sketched out, and take, *en passant*, a few other dishes I omit, and yet these people pretend to be amazed at the quantity of roast beef eaten by the English!

If you ask Russians in Moscow what has made them such tremendous eaters, they have an ingenious explanation. Their forefathers, they say, used to keep rigorously (as the peasants do to this day) all the fasts prescribed by the church. Now the Russian Church modestly requires its faithful ones to fast five months out of the twelve, and to fast not only from meat but from animal products, such as eggs and milk. The Russians of an older generation used to fast, indeed, but then they made up for lost time in the remaining seven months of the year; their descendants have inherited their capabilities of eating in one day as much as is required for two, but respect for the orders of the church as to fasts has died out. Thus in the present-day Russians those habits of devouring energy, which the church's fasts first created, find free scope for their exercise all the year round. I leave philosophers of Mr. Buckle's school to decide whether this is the correct theory; this does not pretend to be a philosophical paper, and I simply say that

Russians have given me the above subtle explanation. There is no doubt that not only in the amount of food they take, but in its comparative cheapness, and in the luxurious way it is served, Russians are far ahead of the rest of Europe in the art of eating.

There is, on this subject, only one more essentially Russian detail which I must not pass over. In all restaurants or tea-shops, and even in brandy-shops—above all these very earthly and worldly scenes, and above all the gluttony or culinary enjoyment, as one cares to term it—in a prominent corner, is the shrine for the Madonna or some saint. The large gold-covered picture is hung high up, and a lamp is always kept burning before it. The light is generally encased in ruby red glass, and its ruddy glow and the subdued glitter of the gold picture always forms a pleasing object on the white wall, to which the eye is attracted. Every Russian, without exception, makes his reverence to the saints, both on entering and leaving the room. This is his delightfully short and easy “grace before and after meat.” Eagerly hungry, as he is when he comes in, rather drunk as he too often is when he goes out, he never omits this gesture-prayer, and if Muscovites have not yet in their hagiology a patron-saint of eating the sooner they canonise one the better.

One habit you notice among Russians in Moscow is that they speak chiefly Russian. Paradoxical as it may seem, this is not a matter of course. The Russians—I speak of the higher classes—in St. Petersburg speak French in public places in preference to their own language. Ask a Russian gentleman in St. Petersburg whether he speaks French, and you will often receive the answer, “Yes, Monsieur, better than the French.” It is an affectation among the more foppish of the Zapadnik party (the Westerns, as they are called) to look on the Russian language as a barbarous tongue. But in Moscow people of the higher classes speak Russian. As spoken in Moscow the language certainly does seem rather harsh; the Muscovites seem to gloat over the harshest gutturals and most impossible vowel sounds their language contains. The St. Petersburg Russian is soft and somewhat drawling, but has a very musical effect if you hear it in a speech on the stage, or, in that somewhat rare event in a Russian Church, a sermon. It is absolutely necessary to learn a little Russian to get along in Moscow, especially in giving orders. Servants, shop people,

and others do exactly what they are told with such an amount of sheepish unreasoning obedience that they will execute the most absurd order sooner than believe you have made an evident mistake. Even in Moscow it is very hard for a stranger to get much practice in speaking Russian, as most of the inhabitants profess to believe he cannot be in earnest in wishing to use their tongue, and to affect great surprise if he manages to pronounce two or three words correctly. At the same time, there is in Moscow a literary circle who hold rather advanced views as to the importance of English scholars and educated people generally paying more attention to the Russian language. I can best show Moscow views on the subject by quoting what was said to me by an intelligent acquaintance there; the accuracy of his facts cannot be denied. "You English," he said, "will admit that on a good understanding between the Russians and you the quietness of Europe will largely depend. How do you try and understand us? You never know our language—a language spoken by 40,000,000 people—you disregard our young but vigorous school of literature, and you are therefore profoundly ignorant of the intellectual forces which influence our life and politics. We, on the other hand, speak English almost as well as you do yourselves; your literature, from Bunyan to Byron and Miss Braddon, is read in the original, or in translations, from one end to the other of Russia; the articles in your magazines are immediately read, and if translated only serve to show to a still wider circle that ignorance of Russia for which we are not to blame." I make no comment on this. It is one side of the question. But views like those quoted are pretty widely held in Moscow society, and it may do no harm to learn that they exist.



## MOSCOW.—A GIANT NURSERY.

THE first time you look out from any height, over the straggling city your eye is caught by an enormous block of building, which, except the Palace, is larger than any of the large buildings of Moscow. It stands on low ground on the Soljanka Street, close to the river, where the Moskwa takes one of those studiously graceful curves by which it seems to try to make up in length what it lacks in breadth, and to divert your attention from the insignificance of its stream—now a roadway of thick ice, powdered over with the last fall of snow. The building looks like a large warehouse, but instead of being smeared over, as we might expect, in one of those tints to which Muscovites are so partial, and which it would puzzle even a fancy dealer who had been engaged in matching Berlin wools all his life to designate, it is painted a sensible, familiar white. The whole look of the structure proclaims that it was built for use and not for show. Its designer should not be styled its architect, for it has no architecture; rather he was a practical man who knew how to put together four walls with windows in them, a roof, and chimneys. In it you do not see any of those Saracenic arches, Grecian pillars, or Gothic windows (which, by the way, would be startling novelties to any of those respected respective nations) which make so many of the houses in Moscow a standing joke in brick and stucco. I have spoken of a warehouse, and the great white building may be called one, but the wares displayed in it are human babies. An assortment of them of all ages, from one day to four weeks, is always kept in stock. It is the great Foundling Institution, the most interesting and best managed establishment of the kind in Europe.

The Foundling Institution was founded by Catherine the Great, whom, not to differ from everyone else who has ever written on Russia, I must hasten to describe as the Semiramis of the North. This “rather fast” lady monarch has certainly provided an incongruously noble monument for herself in the “Foundling,” as it is called. It shelters and cares for about

14,000 children annually, and from statistics it appears that it keeps in life about 7000 souls annually who would otherwise be lost to the Russian Empire. And be it remembered that a large proportion of these souls have male bodies attached to them, which is an important matter for a Government with compulsory military service.

Strangers are admitted to the Foundling on Sunday mornings after eleven o'clock. Mounting the great flight of stone steps you soon reach the wards, situated above the quarters for the servants and the very extensive cooking departments. We enter the large nurseries with some misgivings as to not having brought cotton-wool for our ears, for if all these throats, tiny as they are, did care to cry at once, they could execute a formidable symphony of baby cries. But all apprehensions on this score are soon set at rest. By a merciful and considerate provision for the tympanum of the visitor, they are only admitted to this infantile menagerie after feeding time. All the children are enjoying their siesta, and are not yet arrived at the age of snoring. The silence is only broken by the sliding of our feet over the clean, shining, waxed oak floor, or by one of the nurses, seated between two of the wooden cots, humming a song to herself. On each cot is a ticket—green for boys and red for girls. We did not try and decipher the writing on the tickets, but it consists of a number, the name and age of the child, its date of admission, and—its weight when admitted. The nurses are mostly healthy-looking peasant women; each of them nourishes two children. They are dressed cleanly and picturesquely; they wear a hood of red or brown cloth, a loose jacket with very large, wide, bulging sleeves, and a red and white braided skirt. For the sake of quietness they discard the *lapti*, or bark shoes of the peasant, and their huge feet are encased in shapeless, badly tanned leather slippers. A long detailed survey of the various infants reposing under spotlessly white bed linen and small canopies of white muslin curtains, would only be interesting to an expert. Accordingly, after speedily coming to a conclusion that one child is as like the other as their different cradles are, we leave the wards. As we pass quietly out between the rows of beds, every now and then we see a little pink hand which has found its way outside the white curtains. I say "pink," because I know that is the word expected in the circumstances. In reality, to male eyes at least, the colour of the children was a reddish brown.



Down stairs is the room where the foundlings are received. They are not here left in a parcel at the door, or put in a trap-door in the wall, as in some other places. The mother, or whoever brings the child, walks with it openly into the room. Here are in attendance two of the matrons of the institution, who enter the child on the register. The only questions asked are—First, the date of its birth; and second, whether it has been baptised. No other inquiries whatever are made, and in no case is the name of the father asked. After the entry has been made in the book the child is numbered, a ticket with this number on it is hung round its neck, and a receipt for the child (also marked with this number) is given to the person who has brought it. After this, just like a piece of left luggage—the baby will be given up at any time afterwards, if so desired, to the person producing this receipt, and only on producing the receipt. Sometimes children are claimed in this way after they have been many years in charge of the institution. If its admitted parents reclaim a child they must give a donation of thirty-five roubles to the hospital before they can take it away. Many a poor mother has worked hard and striven long to get together this (for her) considerable sum (about £8) in order to get her numbered child back again to her home. In most cases the mother herself brings her child, and it is easy to believe that the four walls of this receiving room, bare, except for a grim picture of the iron Emperor Nicholas, look down on many a bitter parting and painful scene. The number of children received daily averages forty-five. It is said that more than half are illegitimate. From the absence of inquiry by the officials of the institution on this point, it is difficult to ascertain whether this is a fact, but in all likelihood the proportion is larger.

In very many cases the children arrive unbaptised. The rite of baptism is immediately performed, and, of course, implies the finding of a name for the child. To find names for many thousands of children a year would sorely tax the most inventive ingenuity, and, accordingly, the Foundling has a short and easy method of getting out of the difficulty. Each child gets for its Christian name that of the saint of the day on which it is admitted, for its surname the Christian name (with the addition of the syllable “off”) of the officiating priest who baptises it. Thus, a child received on St. Andrew’s Day, baptised by a priest whose Christian name was Ivan, would be called

Andrei Ivanoff. Soon after baptism the children go through the more secular ordeal of vaccination. When they have been four weeks in the institution they are sent off with their nurses to the country. Sometimes they go to the nurse's own village, where they grow up among a crowd of other little waifs in similar circumstances. In Russia you find villages whose population consists solely of nurses, a semi-savage *Kindergarten*. If the children are not taken to the nurses' houses they are drafted off into some of the numerous *succursales*, or country houses, which the institution possesses, where, as a rule, they get on pretty well. But of those sent to be nursed out in the villages, the number who die in infancy is very large. Their nurses are peasant women who are under no supervision, their ideas as to infant hygiene are of the crudest; their own *Mascha* or *Sascha* (little Mary or Alexander) survived their diet of *soska* well enough, and if this child does not it is not their fault. The *soska* (if readers care to be initiated into such mysteries) is the Russian peasant's substitute for the feeding bottle. It consists of boiled milk, with corn or bread, tied up in a bag—a sort of milk-poultice, in fact. The bag is made of porous linen, and put to the mouth of the child, who sucks in the milky liquid which oozes through. The disadvantage of this nutritive contrivance is that the chances are about even whether it nourishes or chokes the child. It very often does the latter, and the woman, who has been absent for some hours working in the fields, or busy in the yard distilling cabbage soup (the staff of life of the Russian peasantry), comes back to the *Isba* to find that all that remains for her to do for her little charge is to send for the pope to have it decently buried. She must then bestir herself to get another nurseling from the Foundling. The reward for its maintenance will enable her at least always to buy salt to season the soup, and will help her husband, if she has one, to pay his obrok (redemption tax on his land). The dreadful winter climate kills off very many of the sickly children.

Those who do pass safely through the dangers of baby-food and babyhood often lead a more comfortable life than they would in their parents' houses. They are boarded out and paid for by the Government, and sent to the communal school, if there is one. At ten years of age many of the boys are sent from the country back to Moscow; then, at the expense of the institution, they are apprenticed to trades or are found places

in business houses; this is done for hundreds yearly. The others become agricultural labourers or servants in the country. The girls are married as soon as possible to the most eligible peasant lad in the village who will take them, and to make their possible charms more persuasive on his heart the institution always gives each a dowry of sixty roubles, which goes to procure her *trousseau*. One of my drivers in Moscow, a strong, fine-looking, broad-shouldered, brown-eyed, and brown-haired young fellow, had, I was told, married a girl in the above circumstances. We asked him about the dowry. He answered at once and volubly, as he would to any other imaginable question an employer might put to him. He had got some dowry, but we could not find whether it was sixty roubles or not, for unfortunately our Russ broke down under the numerals. This is a very excusable mistake, as any one may see who looks into a Russian grammar. If you want to say eighty-four in Russ you have to nerve tongue and jaws to launch out on the following, "Vossemdjessyattscheturiye."

The nurses in the Foundling are paid about three roubles (10s.) a month. There is always a large supply of them to be had, for the pay is liberal, considering that they are well fed, housed, and cared for in the institution. In very many cases a mother deposits her own child, in order that she may not only get it to nurse, but be paid for doing so. It is no contravention of the rules for a mother to do this.

The other wards of the Foundling are very interesting to medical men. There are all sorts of patent contrivances for saving and strengthening infant life. There is one ward for infants prematurely born, and the most recent appliances known to medical science are used to aid those weaklings to struggle for existence. I was told there are patent shaped baths for washing the children, and there certainly are specially made pillow cushions for dressing them on, so that the knees of the nurses will not stick into them and hurt them. The staff of doctors, dressers, and servants is very large.

This great institution has the great want of all institutions—funds—provided for it in a singular way. In Russia each pack of playing-cards requires a stamp. All the money received by the Government for these stamps goes to the Foundling Hospital. Besides this the institution has a monopoly of the manufacture of playing-cards. I may have more to say of

Russian gambling hereafter ; at present I only say that to supply playing-cards for all Russia is in itself a great fortune. To say nothing of ordinary games of hazard, the Russians are also a bezique-playing people. A Russian club man does not like you to dislike bezique. One of the reasons given for partiality to the game is the great fondness of the Empress for bezique ; Her Majesty plays at it for hours together. All the rest of society has to, or rather does follow, and pretend it has a taste for the game. People may yawn over it, but they are nobly fulfilling a social duty ; for in Russia, as elsewhere, fashion demands that, even if you are to be bored, you must bore yourself by a fashionable method. In Russia, of all places in the world, it would be an unheard of thing not to have a brand-new pack of cards each time you sit down to play. This fashionable fastidiousness is all to the advantage of the card manufactory of the Foundling. The habit of playing games of hazard at cards may often empty the pockets of Russians who indulge in it, but indirectly it fills the coffers of one of the best institutions in their land. The yearly amount received by the Foundling from Government is about £200,000. This is not the place, nor do I intend, to discuss the effect which this institution has on public morality. I will only direct attention to these undoubted facts :—(1.) The crime of infanticide is very rare, almost unheard of in the city of Moscow, or in the Government district of Moscow. (2.) The effect of the institution on the children is of the happiest nature ; they are always considered as desirable *employés* or servants. Granting that the birth of three-quarters of them has been one of shame, that is the very fact which has put many of them in the way of leading a life of honour and industry. Without this institution thousands of these children, instead of having the chance of obliterating the brand of their birth (on which subject, however, Muscovite opinion is not prudishly sensitive), would most likely, and almost of necessity, fall victims to child-murder, either by actual violence or intentional neglect, or else, without parents to look after them, they would sink to that state of wretched helplessness which is easier to fall to in Russia than in any other European country.

The wing of the building opposite to the foundling part contains a large Maternity Hospital, which contains 2000 beds in secret wards, many of them reserved for cases of extreme

poverty only. In another wing is the Nicholas Institution, a most beneficent establishment. It is open to orphan daughters of poor noblemen, or *employés* of the Crown. The girls are well educated in it, free of cost, and get a gift to enable them to purchase an outfit when they leave it. They then enjoy a Government salary for six years, in return for which they teach for that period in Government schools in the country. This provides them with an excellent recommendation for posts as governesses in private families, where they are generally liberally paid, and treated with a consideration unknown to the poor English governess.

It is a great mistake for foreign readers to suppose that in Russian towns arsenals, barracks, State prisons, and State offices exhaust the important public buildings. In Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other large towns public charitable institutions are as proportionately numerous, as well supported and richly endowed, as under the most peace-loving Government in Europe. In fact, many of these establishments are supported solely by the Government. These public charities form the one bright spot in Russian public life, darkened as it is by the shadows of autocratic tyranny, official corruption, and social immorality. In Moscow there are 127 poor-houses, thirty-nine maintenance-houses, where poor people are fed and housed for limited periods, and twenty-one refuges for houseless vagrants or paupers. These refuges or night asylums are filled by the poor wretches who can get a sort of board to sleep on there and enough warmth to keep life together. The inhabitants of these asylums have for their homes in the day time the league-long streets and roads of Moscow. It is not too much to say that in winter, if it were not for these refuges from storms and cold of the night, the police sergeants in Moscow would have on their morning rounds to pick up as many corpses as the number of occupied beds in the gloomy building. There are many great hospitals in Moscow; some open to all nationalities. Every year the number of such foundations increases. The most critical visitors to Russia have been able to find only one fault with Russian charities—that they are insufficient. But this shortcoming is, unfortunately, found all over the world. These establishments are a symptom of one quality in Russian character—kindheartedness. However odious, overbearing, and antagonistic to us we may consider Russian political leaders or military politicians, there

is no doubt that the great mass of the Russian people—the human being in a Russian skin—the

“ . . . immense  
Child-minded millions whom no emperors spare,”

are charitable, liberal, and, above all things, hospitable. They may be misled by those whom they follow for what reason they know not ; but he who has not noticed these qualities in the average Russian and in Russian life must be blind, or swayed by a prejudice, insular or otherwise.



## MOSCOW.—TRADE AND THE BAZAARS.

Light and learning, we know, come first from the East. It is not likely that the co-operative system—army and navy, civil service, mutual, and other stores—came from the same quarter. But in Moscow, as in cities more oriental which it so closely resembles, you find one of the conveniences afforded by these “monster establishments.” You can go to the great Bazaar to do your shopping, and buy almost everything under the sun under one roof. Almost every Russian town has this great central bazaar, or universal dépôt for all wares; it is called the *Gostinnoi Dvor*. This name is interesting—it means the “Court of the strangers.” It was strangers and foreigners who first taught the Russians how to trade; for some centuries they showed themselves apt pupils, and nowadays they have reached such a degree of perfection in the arts of buying and selling that they can overreach a person of almost any nation in commercial transactions. The *Gostinnoi Dvor* at Moscow covers many acres of ground. It consists of a labyrinth of shops, or booths, crowded among a network of arcades or covered streets. The best description I can give of the *Dvor* at Moscow is this. Imagine a spider’s web magnified millions of times, the threads of it extended upwards forming walls, and the spaces shops; roof this over with glass, and you have the Bazaar at Moscow. For extent and the variety of articles displayed in it, it has no equal in Europe. Hundreds of years ago it astonished English and German travellers as much as it does wanderers from both worlds to-day. Beyond the slow aid of time, Moscow and its bazaar have received various sorts of commercial assistance that English people can hardly conceive. Let me give one. The Czar who, in addition to the title given to all Czars of “Most Merciful Father of his People,” was even in his lifetime called by the incongruous but well-deserved name “Ivan the Terrible,” took a great fancy to his city of Moscow. He wished to centralise there not only the Government, but also the chief trade of Russia. The awkward thing was that the neighbouring city, Novgorod, was a formidable commercial rival to Moscow. From its more

convenient situation and established connections, it monopolised the trade Ivan would have liked to see pouring into his capital. But what was the use of being Czar if a difficulty of this sort was to interfere with your views as to the proper channels of commerce? So, at least, thought Ivan, and proceeded to rectify the evil. By a "mighty word of command," or *ukase*, he ordered 18,000 families of traders and merchants to pack off themselves and their baggage from Novgorod and migrate to Moscow! His command was, of course, obeyed, and the marts and streets of Novgorod became silent and deserted. In this way Moscow got a "start," which it has never lost since. To-day its trade is increasing every week, and it bids fair to far outstrip the upstart St. Petersburg. The description of the English as a "nation of shopkeepers" is well known. It is not so well known that in earlier days in Russia the Czar was, as an English traveller dubbed him, the "first shopkeeper in his kingdom." The Czar had the right of free selection of articles of merchandise which came into his kingdom. The monarch dictated the price which he was pleased to pay; it was always so low that the Crown could make a shockingly large profit on the resale of the goods. The merchants had to put up with this high-handed royal trading, or they would have speedily been banished the kingdom, and their effects confiscated. In addition to this means of revenue, the Czars put a large tax on all goods sold by foreign merchants. Thus began the protective system which has been more or less adhered to in Russia to this day.

In order to understand the large amount of retail every-day business transacted in the Gostinnoi Dvor, let me speak shortly of the great industries of Moscow, on which it depends. Those who have not a taste for figures may skip this paragraph, still the figures may be new to some who read them. There are in Moscow nearly 900 factories, employing an aggregate of 90,000 workmen; 250 of these establishments are silk, wool, and cloth mills. There are 15 tanneries, and 50 tobacco factories. Moscow cigarettes command an enormous sale in Russia, and are considered by many connoisseurs as the best in Europe. There are sugar-refineries, and a score or so of tallow-works, whose atmospheric influence prevents you ever paying a second visit to the part of Moscow where they are situated. There are about 70 foundries and metal-works, using an amount of heat in their operations sufficient to melt the snow



off the surface of the whole city. These foundries are kept constantly busy turning out various products from the marvellous mineral wealth of Russia. One would think that in a Moscow winter such a foundry would be a paradise for a Moscow workman. Certainly the temperature of the place is not what we usually associate with Paradise, but in Moscow it must be a great consideration not only to get your wages, but to have the additional comfort of a large fire or furnace thrown in while you work. I have a note that there are twenty-eight distilleries in the city. The number is so comparatively small that it would at first seem a libel on the spirit-consuming capabilities of the inhabitants, but many of the people rejoice in the possession of a private still. Among other things, watches are made; they are not in great favour among townspeople to whom punctuality is of any importance, but the peddlers and Jewish hawkers sell great numbers to the country folk. Even pianofortes of Moscow make are to be had; they are said to be most satisfactory articles—as long as they are not played on. Their silence is their sweetest sound.

Samples of most of these manufactures are found in smaller quantities in the Gostinnoi Dvor. There is no more delightful place for a stroll in all Moscow. When the weather is bad in the streets—when the north-east wind is howling and the snow flying like dust, so that even the very beasts of burden would grumble if they could—you can turn into the shelter of the Bazaar, and wander, forgetting the storm, along the interesting “Rjady,” or rows, with their extraordinary jumble of wares. You can here get anything, from a large portable bath (for which article there is not a very eager demand from Muscovite customers) to a snuff-box. You can buy a Persian carpet fit for the ante-room of a palace, or that article beloved of the *isvostchik*, a horse-rug of a blazing hue or hues, which elsewhere would create a panic among all the hacks of a cab-rank and effectually frighten the wildest cattle. Coming down the scale in size, you can have a handkerchief of Circassian silk, embroidered with silver and gold thread in patterns of Hindoo character which defy copying. Here is a shop for holy images and sacred books, and opposite it, next a sponge and broom shop, is a booth for arms, where you may buy a first-class revolver, an old Cossack fowling-piece, “warranted to burst,” or an Armenian sabre, with filagree-work on the handle of a value to compensate for flaws in the blade.

But the Rjady, or row, which is the most wondrous exhibition for strangers is the jewellers' and the Serebrannji, or silver ryad. Here you see what can only be seen in Russia. The jewellers' shops are often dark, ill-lighted caves, but the sparkle of the gems in them is thereby set off in better contrast. In wooden bowls and trays you see hundreds of unset Persian turquoises of exquisite smoothness and shade. They look like a measure of blue grains of wheat in the bowls. Diamonds are shown in similar trays with little divisions on them in which the different qualities are separated. The merchant will take up a small handful of them in his palm, and let you pick up any you like to look at. These diamonds are Persian, and, though very effective in appearance, are not of great value to jewellers, as they do not stand setting well ; but that does not prevent the Moscow ladies from stopping to take a wistful gaze at them as they take their listless afternoon stroll through the Bazaar—about the only exercise they do take. The other precious stones are displayed with the same bewildering profusion. On small shelves rest lumps of malachite, with one face dressed, showing a rich-coloured velvety green surface, and very large beryls of colourless aquamarine, or of the tint of water with a few drops of red wine in it. The topazes which come from the mines of some of the great Russian millionaires in the Oural Mountains are beautiful lumps of transparent yellow crystal, and the amethysts form heaps of purple of that tint we see in chromolithographs popularly supposed to represent Italian skies. The gold ornaments shown are barbaric in their solidity, and not very beautiful in design. They suggest the idea that an impoverished Moscow lady would realise on her bracelets and earrings through the medium of the melting-pot rather than that of the pawn-shop. But it would take too long to describe the masses of porphyries, carbuncles, rubies, and emeralds (though of these last there are only a few), which flash or sparkle as brightly as the light at their disposal in the dingy booth will allow them. There is one very surprising and noticeable fact about these jewellers. They seem astonishingly careless and reckless in the custody of their gems. A merchant will take up a trayful of turquoises and give it a vigorous shake so as to bring other stones to the top, and will pour the diamonds from one little bowl into another in a rattling stream, as if it would be of no consequence if one or

two dropped or spilled over. In fact, you are irresistibly convinced that the same merchant would manipulate the bowls with greater care if they contained vodka instead of these watery gems. It says a good deal for the *habitués* who promenade the jewellers' ring at Moscow, that they can see all this wealth day after day—remember, without the intervening protection of the glass window of Bond Street or Bourke Street—without falling victims to an incurable kleptomania. If this moral malady did supervene, it would be easy enough to gratify its evil promptings here.

Turning to the shops more exclusively Russian you see many new and strange objects. First and foremost, you are puzzled by the clumsily shaped cradles of unpolished wood. They are made with a surprising amount of solid strength; an infant Hercules could not kick them to pieces. The cradle is flat-bottomed, but it must not be thought that it cannot therefore perform the duty demanded of all cradles—rocking. In Russia a cradle is suspended from the roof of the Isba, like a hammock, and the reason for its great depth is thus explained. The most athletic *Malyutka* (baby) could not scramble over the sides. We are accustomed to associate Russians and bears, but it is not generally known that bears sometimes watch over a Russian cradle—I hasten to say with no covert design of making a meal off its occupant. I know, on good authority, that in many cases bears, which have been tamed while young, have been taught to turn a spit on the fire, to draw water, and to rock a cradle. The Russian bear, like his human prototype, is not such a bad creature if you can catch him young, and remove him from vicious surroundings. Herr Wolff, of Moscow, who had made many experiments with Russian wild animals, told me he had always succeeded in taming a bear, but never (after repeated and careful attempts) in domesticating a wolf. It always relapsed into savagery and a misdirected use of its teeth when it was six months old. In the same shop as the cradle you see many other wooden objects of good or quaint workmanship—buckets, turned walking-sticks, and many dozens of the only ornament that even the poorest peasant has in his hut, a pair of varnished wooden spoons, painted a bright red, with the leaf of the tea-plant smeared on them in gold. In the steel shops you find a sort of work which is only found in Russia—snuff-boxes and purses of steel, with the figures of sledges, churches, and other objects beautifully incised, like the

older Italian niello work. In the Samovar shops you see an enormous assortment of these bright brass tea-urns. They are of all sizes, from the small one which is sufficient for the *moujik's* table in the earlier years of wedded bliss, up to the enormous cauldron holding many gallons, which may find its place in the canteen, to quench by harmless draughts the thirst of a regiment of famished Cossacks. Next door to the Samovars, however, you may see kettles and pans which have the unmistakable stamp of the English Midlands marked on their homely forms.

This contrast is most striking everywhere. You see plates of priceless Persian pottery and chased goblets from Bokhara, which have been carried by the caravan of weary camels over long sandy deserts, and have been hidden with difficulty from the robbers of the Steppes, side by side with a dinner service from Staffordshire, which has come here by the more prosaic railway, and on whose newly-opened case you can still distinguish, written with a masterly disregard for foreigners and their languages, the magic words "with care." Some of the panes of Persian painted jewel-glass lying here would not disgrace the cathedral windows of Chartres or Cologne; all of it that cannot be sold for mosques here is cut up and wasted in making kaleidoscopes.

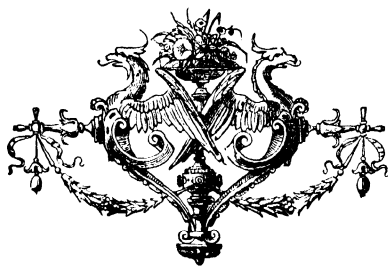
But the most interesting sight of all is the holy-image shops, where the *hogs* (sacred pictures) are sold. The picture is first painted on wood, then it is covered with brass, with openings cut in it so as to show the face and hands of the picture underneath, all the rest being covered. Round the head and wrists a circle of gems is stuck into this layer of brass—sham if your saint costs you two roubles, real if you pay 500 (about £50). The favourite pictures are the "Madonna," "St. Michael," many Russian bishops, and "St. Philip," the one martyr of the Russian church. These are the properly blest and orthodox pictures. But if you press the dealer you can see some of the extraordinary images in vogue amongst those of the wilder dissenters or Raskolniks (old believers). The sale of these pictures is forbidden by law, but that only adds to their price, and does not check the trade in them. They are most extraordinary productions, monstrosities which would be more in their place in the heathen temples of Benares or the caves of Ellora. Most of them cannot be described in decent language any more, than can many of the revolting practices which

constitute the religious belief of the Raskolniks who venerate them.

The merchants in the Gostinnoi Dvor are a strange crew. They are thoroughly oriental in the way they pester you to buy. The moment a stranger is seen at the end of one of the rows his advent is telegraphed along by signs and whispers, so that as he passes each shop the merchant has already got out his choicest wares, and half a dozen are calling out in tones of insinuating rivalry, "Poschaluyte, Pajal Sudar" (if you please, if you please—here ! sir). The merchants here all dress Russian fashion, great black coat tied at the waist, black fur cap and long hair falling round their shoulders. Their system of conducting business is peculiar. To many of them, whose profits come to £4000 or £5000 a year, bookkeeping is entirely unknown ; they trust altogether to their memory and extraordinary mnemonic devices. Most of them use the Tartar *Suanpan*, or calculating slate, as they cannot write. As is perhaps known, this is a slate-frame with horizontal wires, along which run movable beads of different colours on the different lines. It is extraordinary to see the rapidity with which the merchants will go through the most complicated calculation—their long fingers move on the wires as if they were playing a harp, and they move their beads on two or three different wires at once with unerring accuracy. If the purchaser who is ignorant of Russian meets with a merchant who can write, a most extraordinary comedy is gone through. Two bits of paper are brought out. The merchant pencils down his price on his piece, and the stranger jots down on his scrap his figure, generally half the amount asked from him. The merchant looks at this, then with dramatic disgust tears his piece up and brings out two new pieces of paper, and the operation is repeated. Each time the seller writes his figures in more enormous characters, as if to show his decision, and towards the end of a protracted bargain he requires a large sheet to write the price on, and the shop looks fit to supply a school of boys with material for a game of paper chase.

Between three and four in the afternoon the shops begin to shut, or rather, the merchants lock up their goods and leave them, for, of course, there are no shutters to put up or doors to lock. A large part of the Dvor was burned some time ago, and hence no lights are allowed in it now. No smoking is allowed, and strangest of all, no sale of intoxicating liquor. By

four o'clock in winter the merchants have gone off to gorge at the sort of dinner I described in a former article. They are all the readier for it, as they come to their booth early in the morning, and are so eager in business as not to stop for a mid-day meal. Travelling vendors of catables perambulate the Bazaar with tea and piroghis (paste patties). The merchant thus lives literally hand to mouth in the Bazaar at lunch time. If you come on him as he eats his pie, his munching does not make his rapid Russian more easily intelligible, but his eagerness to finish his meal may give you a chance of purchasing an article a fraction nearer its real fair value. That in itself is an event as rare in Moscow shopping as it is enviable.



## EVENING DIVERSIONS IN MOSCOW.

THE chief, indeed the only, amusement for a winter evening in Moscow is the theatre. It, too, only serves to divert gay Muscovites for the first part of the evening. People are driven there during the hours it is open in default of anything better to do. The nights are so long, that by seven or eight o'clock in the evening all other modes of killing time have been exhausted. Business finishes about four o'clock. People have rested an hour or so in their club, or more usually in the tea traktir, which here takes the place of the café of other Continental towns. Dinner is over, and even Russians require some hours before they can conjure up an appetite for supper. The theatre is left as the only refuge for those who want occupation. The same people go to the same boxes or seats night after night; they go to talk and see each other; they know the piece by heart, so they pay only a passing attention to it just as the Italians do in their theatres. Here the day is short and the nights are long. Moscow may sometimes be a very dull city in the daytime, but it shakes itself into a state of protracted gaiety for the night. You specially notice this when the weather (that most important matter in common life here) is, as it so often is, execrable. Take, for example, a day when the storm clouds drive about, and descend so low that they look as if they would like to come down and smother you in a heap instead of wasting themselves attacking you in the more diluted form of snow, hail, or sleet. At such a time, if you walk through the grandly fashionable Nikitskaya Street or other similar quarters, you do not see a sign of life in the great square mansions. The double shutters of wood and iron are shut on the windows facing the street, there are no sledges at the doors, and the only passers-by are one or two bulkily-dressed tradesmen's boys, with loads on their heads; they stare at you, wondering why you are walking about there at this time. The inmates of the great houses would seem to be agreeing practically with the opinion of the Scotchman, who declared "it was a confounded bad day would not make a

good night." But between seven and eight in the evening the silence is broken by sledges whizzing about, and the laughter of their drivers as they banter one another—not in the curt, too forcible "chaff" of English "cabbies," but volubly, in long sentences of harsh-sounding Russian. Servants come out to shovel away the snow from the entrance, and the lamps are lit under the iron-roofed canopy sheltering the front door. One by one the numerous sledges hurry off from the doors. In Russian great establishments there are a large number of equipages kept. The master and mistress have their separate sledge, each son of the house has his, and even the governess, tutor, and secretary have one at their disposal. By eight o'clock fashionable Moscow has driven off to the amusements of the evening, generally beginning with the theatre, then going to receptions, followed by a ball and a supper whose dimensions would take the breath and appetite away from a leader of London or Parisian *haut ton*. The late dinner party with its fatuous feeding, as we know it, does not exist in Moscow. Tea receptions are sometimes given at six o'clock; they are less formal, and are the pleasantest social amusements in Russia.

The Great Imperial Theatre stands in a very large square, right opposite the high walls of the Kitai Gorod (Chinese Town). It is certainly one of the largest theatres in Europe, and they say in Moscow that it is only surpassed in size by San Carlo at Naples. The relative size of theatres and cathedrals is a vexed question into which life—not to say the chapter of a book—is too short to enter. But it is easy to believe what is confidently asserted, that the stage of the Moscow theatre is the largest in the world. The proscenium is eighty-four feet across. The management of the whole place, like the house itself, is nothing less than regal. You drive up under a portico of eight magnificent stone Ionic pillars, and your sledge deposits you almost within the doors. About the entrances parades a guard of twenty stately soldiers in full uniform. There are about the same number of lackeys in the red stockings and crown-bespangled blue coats of the Imperial livery, waiting to carry in your coat, opera-glasses, or other *impedimenta* for you. The interior of the house is gorgeous. Its colours are crimson, white, and gold. Everything is kept so fresh and new that there does not seem a dingy corner in the whole place. There are four tiers of seats, two of them consisting entirely of boxes. This house is reserved entirely for



representation of grand opera and ballets. One night the only bill of fare was a ballet in eight acts. In one scene a fountain of real water was introduced, the jets throwing up a thick stream forty feet high. A bouquet thrown to the chief ballerina was about three feet in diameter, and took two men to carry it off. Russian ideas as to theatrical "floral honours" are, if not refined, at least liberal. By a piece of slightly vulgar symbolism, the bouquet in question was red and white—all in *camellias*, in a land almost too cold for the snowdrop. These colours had reference to the shades of the favourite ballerina's scanty skirts, and not, as the more poetical might fancy, to the hues that tinted her cheeks. The orchestra at this "Bolshoi Teatr" consists of seventy or eighty performers, who are all paid, and well paid, by the State, but it must be remembered that the receipts average £400 per night. On one occasion we saw here Rubinstein's opera, "The Demon." The thesis of this production is no less formidable a one than to portray to appropriate music the conversion of the devil by the *prima donna* soprano, provided with gauze wings for her laudable endeavour. The music, although in the progress of the drama it is represented as having a remarkable effect on the fiend-hero, has failed to charm audiences in England or Germany. Still with touching devotion to native art and reverence for a native *virtuoso*, the Muscovites listen to it night after night, sleeping except during the ballet parts. We heard it on its seventy-ninth performance. I asked an officer of great stature and many medals, who was sitting next me, how it was that the theatre was always filled to hear a piece everyone confessed not liking. He answered, "Well, we do not like the music much, but then you see Rubinstein is our greatest Russian composer." This answer was what you expect from any Russian. The Russians may not have many authors, painters, or musicians, but they are intensely and unreasoningly proud of those they have.

A seat in the stalls at this theatre costs about four or five roubles. The boxes are filled by their proprietors, who belong to the upper or wealthier classes of Moscow. There is a large sprinkling of military men, fine men in fine clothes, and their epaulettes and orange sashes supply spots of colour much needed in the house, for most of the ladies in Moscow dress in black for evening toilettes, and wear very little jewellery at the theatre. And here truth compels me to say that

those who can speak in high terms of Moscow female beauty cannot have a very high ideal of feminine loveliness. Most of the faces you see in the boxes at the theatre are the same you meet in the most splendidly appointed equipages in the exclusively fashionable quarters or promenades, but they have too strong an infusion of the Mongol or Tartar type for English tastes, and a thick flattened nose and yellowish complexion do not add very charming finishing touches to the facial picture. But one cannot have everything everywhere, and St. Petersburg contains enough feminine grace and beauty to make up for the shortcomings of two or three Moscows. In one of the proscenium boxes, large enough for a drawing-room, we have pointed out to us the notorious Princess O—— (whose name I suppress lest this should ever meet her eyes—which did *not* look charming—in Moscow). If the *chronique scandaleuse* of the place is to be believed, this lady exercises a powerful if not too moral influence over one of the Grand Dukes. I may here say that if even half of the cynically frank talk which goes on in the smoking-rooms of the theatres between the acts is to be believed, people who are ignorant of the manners and morals of Russian higher or richer classes could there receive a pretty severe shock. However, I constantly found in Russia that it was those who knew the country best who took all the moral eccentricities of these classes, and their free reading of social laws, as a matter of course. One thing is certain. If Russian censorship ever relaxes its grip—its journalistic mortmain—sufficiently to allow the publication of a “society journal” in Moscow, its proprietor will be a lucky man. He will have endless material for “revelations in high life,” and his paper will make him richer than the Demidoffs.

The opera is over between ten and eleven o'clock, and then the evening really begins for many of the audience. Every one, without exception, who can afford it, goes off to have a supper. Some take it at home, some at the large hotels or restaurants, which get crowded, and some at receptions or balls. If your walk home lies northward you will be surprised to see a whole flock of handsome sledges round one of the side doors of the theatre. After passing two or three times you learn that these conveyances belong to members of the “gilded youth” of Moscow, who want to drive their favourite ballerina home, or to a supper at Lopachef's. As always happens, these young men, while they ape the civilisation of London or Paris, copy

only its most objectionable features. Most of these "swells" of Moscow, who make the greatest display by their extravagance and fast life, are not noblemen, or indeed of gentle birth. As a rule they are the sons of merchants who belonged to the old Russian school, and—laboriously or unscrupulously—amassed the fortunes their sons spend in the French fashion; for to mistake him for a Frenchman is the greatest compliment you can pay to one of these "young bloods;" though so far from having blue blood, they have not even what the Spaniards call good red blood in their veins. These wealthy merchants' sons are the class who attract a stranger's attention more than any other class of inhabitants in Moscow. Most of them, wealthy as they are, live far beyond their large incomes. But all Russians, as a rule, like to do this, and think that if they are only spending their whole annual income they are economising. Some of the more wealthy of these young men form themselves into small bands or clubs. Many of these associations have the most extraordinary rules and qualifications for admission. There was one society I heard of called the "Razsvetü," or "Dawners." One of their rules was that whatever time their suppers began, every member must be found still drinking when the light of the candles on the table paled before that of the grey dawn outside. Many of these coteries, however, dabble a little in politics, but are too rich to expose themselves to any danger from the police. Those who have sacrificed property and position for the revolutionary party chiefly come from the nobles. From what I heard, the meetings of these merchants may be summed up thus:—Drink a great deal of champagne and speak a great deal of the "future of Russia." It is of the future of their country that young men of the class I am dealing with always talk eloquently; they find it more prudent to keep silence about its past.

These wealthy merchants' sons are the most unpleasant class in Muscovite social life. They have not that brave desire of the poor student—often so pathetic in its hopelessness—to better themselves or their people, neither have they the charming manner and broad sympathies of the educated Russian gentleman. As a rule they have never been to the university; all they have learnt has been in the course of a two years' tour of the Continent with unlimited money to spend and naturally low tastes to gratify. A great number of those Russians whose reckless prodigality and princely magnificence astonishes

unsuspecting English or American people in the great capitals of Europe, are simply the sons of wealthy tradesmen. Abroad they call themselves "Count" or even "Prince," the rank of their self-created nobility varying according to the length of ~~their~~ purse. But people who know anything of Russia can generally distinguish these wealthy impostors very easily—by their name. They cannot, it is obvious, being subjects of a country with the passport and strict police system of Russia, change their name without great and possibly serious consequences to themselves or their property. Hence, even if their carriage has a newly designed coat of arms as large as a dinner-plate, their disguise can be seen through by any one who can recognise their name as smacking of the moujik's hut rather than the nobleman's seat. We should feel anxious to see the patent of nobility of a peer who termed himself "Viscount Snooks" or "Earl of Turniptops," and many of these Russians' names look just as absurd with a title prefixed to them.

When these cheerful young men go in for a night's amusement they do not spare money in gratifying their whims. If the supper is to be very gay, and everything is to be done in first-class style, the following "fun" is indulged in. The proprietor of the restaurant in the Soboleffka, or some other street of ambiguous reputation, is called in. After the orders for supper are given, he is asked to value all the glass, crockery, mirrors, and other objects in the room. He does this, leaving a handsome margin for himself over and above what the objects cost him. Then, having paid this very often large sum, the company proceed blithely to smash everything in the room—mirrors, flower-glasses, and all. The restaurant-keeper cannot complain; he has been paid, and the gentlemen have their amusement. If a Russian young merchant prince were to give an account of such a night afterwards, in his own tongue, his very language would use irony on him; he would tell you that he had enjoyed himself, but the nearest translation of the phrase he uses would be that "he had rejoiced his soul."

Readers must be careful to remember that I have spoken of only one type of the Moscow young men, and that even in these classes there are honourable exceptions. Still, in dealing with classes, the truth must be expressed in generalities, and this account of the young *nouveaux riches* of Moscow is generally correct. But making all due allowances for exceptions, the

fact remains that this habit of life amongst many of the city youth is a serious blot on the Russian social system. In most other countries these young men would be carrying on the fine businesses started by their fathers. As it is they squander most of their capital in a few years, and the business falls into the hands of the ubiquitous, sturdy, and steady-living German. The half-ruined Russian does not, it may be imagined, look with increased love on the foreigner who has ousted him from his place in the commercial world. Discontented and *blasé*, he becomes more a source of danger than of benefit to his native country. He is apt to eagerly adopt any of those fatally absurd political or social theories which in Russia shoot up like some deadly fungus growth—like it both in their poisonous nature and in the suddenness with which they spring up—and unfortunately widely embraced almost as quickly as they develop themselves.



## THE WAYS AND MEANS OF THE CHURCH.

“You call our country poor ; but you forget our great mines to which we have not yet had recourse. They are not those of the Oural or Siberia—they are our churches, monasteries, and shrines. To take the treasure out of them we require neither picks nor shovels ; it will be handed to us willingly by sainted hands in sacred vessels.” So said a Russian companion to me as we stood by the famous chapel of the Iberian Mother of God, about ten o’clock on a bright Moscow morning. This shrine, so loved of the people, stands in the space between the two arched entrances (called the Iberian Gate) which lead from the Chinese Town into the Red Place, almost opposite the Great Theatre Place. Visitors to Moscow are always advised to take a stand here for some time on a fine day, to watch the habits of the Russian people. You can see here, in a practical outward form, three great characteristics of the people—their superstition, their religious devotion, and liberality. It is owing to the union of these three qualities that what was stated as above by my friend has become strictly true of Russia. I admit that he clothed his words in somewhat Oriental language, as all his countrymen are apt to do when they feel strongly on a subject, still, they express a weighty fact.

The Iberian Chapel is one of the most hallowed spots in the whole of Russia. Whenever he comes to Moscow, the first place which the Emperor himself visits is this chapel ; he dismounts from his horse and kneels before it to pay his devotions with uncovered head, in order to sanctify himself before he enters the Kremlin. Although only about twelve feet square and eighteen feet high, no one could pass by this little place without pausing to admire it, if not to worship at it, so picturesque and gorgeous is it. The inside walls, open to the street from the front, are of the richest blue enamel, studded with gold stars, the centre of the star being often formed by a large pearl. The roof is plated with gold, and so is the floor which is not trodden ; there is a barrier across the entrance, before which the worshipper directs his prayers to the sacred

picture which stands back in the recess, the circle of thickly-studded gems round its head shining like a rainbow-coloured nimbus. This picture of "the Mother of God," from which the chapel takes its name, has a most legendary legend attached to it. It is a copy, some hundred years old, of a picture at the Iberian Monastery of Mount Athos, but nine-tenths of the 700,000 people of Moscow, who reverence it, will have it that this picture is the original, and that it was the actor in the wonderful story they believe about it. Whether the picture is original or not here is the short story; it should be read by all who wish to understand the Russian mind, as a sample of what the people can and do believe. This docile belief is used, cleverly used, by the church as a lever to lift untold sums yearly out of the pockets of the people into its own money-bags. Granting then, that for its acceptance the story requires that morbid development of faith possessed by more than half a million dwellers in Moscow, I tell the legend as it was told me standing by the chapel which commemorates it.

When the Iconoclasts of Asia Minor were, in the ninth century, breaking to pieces all sacred pictures and treating their worshippers similarly, a poor widow of Nicæa seized this picture, and, sooner than let it be dishonoured, threw it into the sea. It floated indeed, but, instead of lying flat on the water, it stood up on its end as it had been used to be set in the church, and the astonished woman watched it sailing away erect over the waves till the gleam of its gold faded out of sight as it receded towards the northern shores of Greece. Now, it so happened that this very widow's son one day took refuge in the monastery of Mount Athos and became a monk there. He told the monks the strange story of the picture, and described the course it was taking when last seen. The pious cloister brothers believed the tale, and kept a look-out for the arrival of the strange sea waif on their shores. But 200 years passed by, and, although all hope of its coming had not been given up, still the picture never came. At last one evening the abbot (Igumen) of the convent was praying alone in his cell, perched high up on one of the sheer rocky precipices against the foot of which the waves dashed. A terrific storm was raging, the wind roared through the majestic oaks which surrounded the cell, it entered and howled round its bare walls and blew out the lamp burning before the sacred

image hanging in the corner. In the sudden darkness the abbot looked up from his prayers, and, going to the window, gazed out over the black seething waters of the Ægean. Where the waves were darkest shone a light—it most likely belonged to some Turkish pirate galley—and the abbot crossed himself. But the holy man rubbed his eyes and looked out again. There sure enough was the light, and as he gazed the abbot saw that it rose up and was prolonged in a pillar of fire which reached to heaven. Holy curiosity and the sleeping monks were aroused. A boat was soon launched by the brothers, and the unpractised oarsmen pulled bravely out over the surf and raging foam towards the light. When they came nearer it they saw and knew at once that it was the long-looked-for picture; but the farther they followed the farther the picture receded from them. They gave up the pious pursuit sad and despairing in heart and weary and drenched in body they returned and told the abbot of their vain quest. That night the abbot dreamed a dream which bade him take boat, and leaving it, walk boldly out over the sea and grasp the picture. He obeyed, and all happened as it was told in his dream, and the picture was brought in with chants of rejoicing and sound of prayer, and set up over the high altar. But next morning it was found to have left its post, and was discovered hanging over the Iberian door of the convent, and as often as it was removed it always returned thither of its own accord. Then the abbot dreamed again. This time he was bidden to let the picture rest where it had placed itself, when it would be to the convent as a shield against troubles and a rampart against oppression. Now in the Iberian Gate at Moscow it (or a copy of it) continues to exert this same holy influence.

It is a fact that in Moscow, if you affected to disbelieve this story, you would greatly pain and shock the average townsman, while to a country peasant you would appear a heathen monster, and he would at once spit on the ground, to avert evil consequences from speaking to you. If you published a pamphlet critically dissecting the evidence on which the picture's claims to miraculous power rest, you would be imprisoned, and, if a Russian, would in addition be fined a considerable sum, which would most likely go to the funds of the very chapel whose saint you had ventured to discredit. For speaking against some tenets and beliefs of the Russian Church far less important than the above, Lord Radstock was



attacked most violently in some pamphlets, which I have bought both in St. Petersburg and Moscow. These brochures called on all true orthodox believers to eject (forcibly if necessary) the "English schismatic" from holy Russia, and I believe he was put to much inconvenience from the popular feeling excited.

As might be expected, a picture which could do the things this one did can do anything. Accordingly, you are prepared to hear of numerous miracles undoubtedly performed by it. A dispute for precedence similar to the well-known one between Mohammed and his mountain has been promptly settled as far as this picture is concerned. If a wealthy Moscow merchant finds it inconvenient to transport himself and household to the picture he sends for it, and it will go to him at his house, so that he and his family can pray to it all day if they like in the privacy of their own drawing-room. The lowest sum for which the picture will attend any house is twenty-five roubles (nearly £3), but, according to the wealth of the person, fifty or even one hundred roubles will be paid. This hiring for all day is of course only within the reach of the wealthy classes; but the picture will pay a shorter visit and work a cure for poorer patrons at a reduced amount. There is no doubt that wherever the additional aid of a doctor is called in, and a cure of the sick patient is effected, the picture gets more credit than the medical man. Sometimes a number of the poorer people will club together, and pay for a visit from the Iberian Virgin. If you are lucky you may chance to see the revered image going its rounds through the streets of Moscow, and a strange sight it is. It travels in a magnificent gold carriage drawn by two horses, called white by the orthodox, dapple-grey by those with unprejudiced heretical eyes. The horses are harnessed tandem. The coachman and the leader of each of the horses go bare-headed. The former is dressed in a fine suit of purple or red velvet, covered with gold, and on his back hangs a brocaded cloth with a holy picture on it. It is naturally in times of national panic from epidemics or impending war that this picture, like others of its class, makes its largest haul. It is said in Moscow that during a cholera visitation one sacred picture, from its visits to private houses alone, brought in £4500 to the lucky convent which owned it.

But, meanwhile, while the picture is perambulating Moscow in its miraculous business, charging its pious hirers, by a scale

of distance or time like a hackney carriage, its niche in the chapel at the Iberian Gate is not empty. Through that gate there is a constant stream of foot-passengers, and if they had nothing to pray to there they would not be able to discount the value they hope to accrue from the granting of their prayers by just now dropping a few copecks into the box, prominently placed so that only those cannot see it who will not. In Russia almost every prayer is accompanied by this "metallic pass" from the hand of the worshipper to the shrine of the worshipped saint. If the original image is away a copy, kept for the purpose, is at once slipped into its place. Artistically speaking the painting of both pictures is so bad that they could not be distinguished, and the most microscopic glance cannot tell the difference between the old sanctified coat of paint and the new copy; hence the substitution is unobserved, and the pious fraud succeeds admirably.

It is most interesting to stand by and watch the crowd of people passing through the gate in costumes as varied and original as those of a fancy ball. Every Russian, without exception, bows low two or three times and crosses himself before the picture. The longer you are in Russia and watch the people as worshippers the more are you astonished at their athletic prowess and supple quickness in their devotions. Take, for example, the peasant in his sheepskin dress and cap, with long brown beard and hair, and high knee-boots, who is now doing his reverences. He bows rapidly forward from the waist till the upper half of his body is quite horizontal, crosses himself while in this lowly posture, and rapidly recovers himself into an erect position, keeping his legs perfectly straight the whole time. A professor of calisthenics would hire this Ivan Ivanovitch as a model for his class. Let those readers who meditate entering the Greek Church practise this exercise, and they will find it a rather formidable feat to acquire preparatory to joining the Orthodox Communion. In fact, a scoffing philosopher like Mr. Buckle would find a constant and inevitable connexion between the profession of the Russo-Greek faith and a strong development of the muscles about the knee-joints. After this humble worshipper comes a fashionably-dressed lady, smothered in soft furs. She has alighted from her elegant sledge as she passes, thinking a short prayer accompanied by the gift of a green one-ruble paper-note will do her no harm as she hurries away to the bookseller

to procure *La Bouche de Madame X.*, or any newly published French romance of equally chaste tendencies. Then comes a monk with his tall black bonnet with the cross stamped on the front; he prays like the rest, but, from his profession, considers himself relieved from the necessity of contributing a monetary gift. You notice one man stalk through without turning aside to the chapel—he is a Jew. Like his co-religionists elsewhere, he sells old clothes here also. He is tall and stout, with long red beard and hair, a scarred nose, and watery, cunning, grey eyes; he wears a low, round cap, and both his arms are laden with fur coats, a bright woman's shawl, and the inevitable old hat. After this unbeliever a milk-woman comes along, and has to lay down her earthen vessels to pray at ease; she carries on her right shoulder a wooden rod bent into the shape of a reversed letter U; at each of its ends is a hook which goes through the handle of the great jugs. Every moment some new strange figure appears—now it is a bird-seller, with a cage about six feet long and one foot broad in one hand, and three or four empty smaller cages hung on a stick in his other hand; buyers pick out the birds they want in the large cage and then can buy a cage for their newly-acquired captive on the spot from the ready merchant. The twittering of the birds left down on the snow does not seem to distract the owner as he rapidly tells his short tale of prayers. Again, you see the street-seller who, by common consent of all his rivals, is allowed to be the most consummate cheating rascal that walks Moscow—the seller of holy pictures. He will get, in five minutes, double price from an old woman for a picture of St. George, by cajoling her into the belief that if she hangs it up in her hut the rye bread will always rise properly, and only half the usual amount of salt will be needed to season the cabbage soup. The specimen before us is a young, smooth-faced fellow, with black hair brushed back from his white forehead; he carries a sheaf of about fifty pictures tied on a map-stick, hung on to a strap across his shoulders; he always does a great trade. The Nihilists have made use of these sellers of sacred pictures, as they also have of sham colporteurs, to disseminate their tracts and forbidden seditious papers through most of the south of Russia. This sharp practitioner in images of the saints prays and sways his body with great fervour and energy. But to give a description of the various types of men who file past you through the gate, in their fearfully and wonderfully

imagined costumes, would tire my readers as much as seeing this motley procession in reality would entertain them, and reconcile them to standing ankle-deep in the snow of Moscow for a few minutes. This chapel and picture which have detained us so long is one of the best investments of the sort which the Russian Church has. Of all these people there are very few who are so poor as not to throw at least a five or ten copeck piece (a halfpenny or a penny) into the box. It is surprising to learn that these contributions from casual passers-by to the picture of the Iberian Mother of God come to about £10,000 a year, which goes to pay the stipend of the Bishop Metropolitan of Moscow. This is leaving out of account the money earned by the picture in its peregrinations from house to house, which comes to a far larger sum annually.

But the Russian church has many other ways of transferring the ownership of its filthy lucre from the clutch of the world into its own safe keeping. For instance, it is an object of holy ambition in Russia to be buried in the ground of some great monastery, under the shadow of its gilt bulbous domes and towering crosses, or beside its castellated walls and fortress towers. To bury one of their number in such a *campo santo* as, say, that of the Troitzky Monastery, a nobleman's family will readily pay the required sum of 2000 roubles for a grave. This same monastery has also the privilege of having collecting boxes placed on the platforms of the larger railway stations on the St. Petersburg to Odessa line. When these boxes are opened at the end of the year, they are found to contain, altogether, about a quarter of a million roubles. Then again, the possession of a holy picture like that I have spoken of may mean a million or so of roubles of yearly revenue for a convent. Pilgrims flock to it from many quarters, bringing with them, in many cases, pilgrims' wallets full of roubles, and brisk appetites as well. The monastery boards and lodges them for some days, and relieves them of their cash in return for thrice-blessed *panagias* (pictures), amulets, crosses, or books with jewelled covers. Sums are invested, too, for the singing of perpetual masses for the souls of those who think they need it and can pay for it, and the monastery draws the income quarterly, on giving a written certificate that the masses have been duly performed. It is sarcastically said that the sum required by the monasteries for keeping in repose the soul of an official is as nearly as possible that which he has wrongly

abstracted from Government, so that his wife and family are left almost penniless.

Besides all these means of support, the churches and monasteries are receiving every year gifts of gold plate, jewels for pictures, mitres of gold and pearls, bishops' staves, and other princely gifts. In the sanctuary of the Cathedral at Moscow, for instance, there is a large nugget of pure gold called a "Sinai." In most churches there are similar objects of greater or less value. It is only when you have seen the mitres, with their pearls and diamonds, the great books of the Gospels and missals with their enamelled covers and jewelled crosses of sapphires, rubies, and emeralds, some few of which are declared by competent judges to rival the finest Crown jewels in Europe; the gorgeous vestments used in the ceremonials of the Church, the precious stones of which rattle as the officiating priest moves; the crucifixes of jasper, of agate, of aquamarine, or of onyx; the altar-cloths, which look as if gems of all colours had been spilled on them and stuck where they fell; and when, in addition to all this, your dazzled eyes are met by the walls of the churches plated with gold, like a gilded cave, that you can realise the untold wealth of easily realisable materials that exists in Russia's churches and monasteries.

The history of Russia tells us that in former times it was the clergy who often won the battles over, and withstood the sieges of, foreign invaders and oppressors. To-day the military duties of the clergy are restricted to blessing the banners, which they pray may lead their flocks to victory. The time is past when they can emulate the spirit of the western Pope Paul, who declared he would sooner trust to the sword of Paul than the keys of Peter. The arms and hands of the monks are now exercised, if at all, in the nonchalant tilling of their own fields, or in tending their favourite flower-plot during the four short months the Russian soil will consent to bear blossoms. But the Russian shrines can supply those other sinews of war—golden ones. The monks may not have gunpowder, but they could supply a mountain of gold-dust. The churches of Russia will, if it should ever be necessary, find money to aid their country in her wars. They are fond of boasting that the extent to which they can do this will, if occasion should arise for their help, astound the rest of Europe.

## IN AND OUT OF MOSCOW.

STILL in Moscow! Everyone who reads these sketches, or any other account of Russia, may be somewhat surprised at the amount of attention directed to Moscow. But this is inevitable. The play of "Hamlet" with the part of Hamlet left out, or a description of Sydney without mention of its harbour, would be complete and accurate productions compared to any description of Russia which did not deal fully and minutely with Moscow. It must be remembered that this city is all the more important just because of the startlingly small number of large towns in Russia. It is the great characteristic town of the empire—an epitome of its races, customs, commerce, and religions. Odessa, for instance, is in Russia but not Russian; it has the cosmopolitan characteristics of all great seaports. Kieff, for the foreign observer, differs from Moscow only in its antiquarian interest. Nijni-Novgorod, in its grass-grown extent, is simply growing the grass on the grave of its former greatness; it has only a spasmodic annual resurrection for its great five weeks' fair, which is the occasion for an immense amount of commercial business, an extraordinary conglomeration of different nationalities, and a prodigious display of shocking profligacy. St. Petersburg is not a Russian town, and it is likely that the present course of events in the country, especially extensions of territory towards Asia, may tend to lower its importance more and more as compared with Moscow. Moscow is also the centre of an immense railway system, drawing all the iron lines to it like a magnet. Moscow is, as the Russians tell you, a glass wherein you may see reflected the image of their country. If they complain of the appearance they present in it, they should be answered in the words of the popular proverb, which their own Gogol prefaced to a famous comedy, "Don't blame the glass, the grimace in it comes from your own face."

The comparative unimportance and sameness of the country population also increases the value of this great town as a field of observation for the stranger. There seems no difference between one Russian village and another, between one moujik

and his greasy fellow. But while the moujik may not form an engrossing or varied subject for study, it must always be borne in mind that it is on his broad back that the fabric of the whole Russian Empire rests, though he is, poor fellow, the most unheroic Atlas imaginable. But he has, if he knew it, the power of a second Hercules to clean out the Augean stables of the tyrannical State bureaus of his land.

Also, if Moscow is rather a hard city to get to, it is equally hard to bring yourself to leave it. Even visitors who hate the Russians develop a "sneaking fondness" for it. The worst points in government and people seem in it, for the stranger at least, toned down by their picturesque surroundings. In Moscow an Englishman might easily forget that there had been a Crimean war—in St. Petersburg never. Why this should be so it is hard to say; but it certainly is so. In the older city, too, there is a certain freedom and ease of life which is very charming; as many of the people have not yet adopted the straight-cut clothes of modern Europe, so they do not seem yet to have acquired all the tedious conventionalities and rigid social forms of the rest of the Continent. You constantly see before you in the Kremlin and the old churches the Moscow of 200 years ago. You often feel as if you were living in it then, when it was not a city of a kingdom whose ambitious arms threatened any important country, but simply the interesting capital of a prince interesting chiefly from his semi-barbarity.

One of the most prominent features of this old Moscow is the Romanoff (accented on the second syllable, if you please) House, in the Warwarka Street, where Michael, the first of the present reigning dynasty of the Romanoff Czars, was born. It is a strange little place. You cannot help thinking of it as a magnified doll's house. It appears only one story high from the street, and you step down into it from the front door, and it seems odd and out of place to be received by the two gorgeous porters in the imperial livery, who show you over the house. The ground falls so rapidly away from the street that the building increases to a height of three stories and cellars from its yard at the back. You are led through a lot of rooms, remarkable chiefly for their smallness. In many of them a man of moderate size cannot stand upright, and the original Romanoff inhabitants must have had chronic rheumatism in their backs from bending down to pass under the ridiculously

low doorways. In the house are preserved a number of the domestic objects of the period—inkstands, images, chairs, dresses, and plate. Among the latter the servant points out to you with great *empressement* a silver drinking-jug, a present from one of our own King Charleses. It doubtless foamed with bumpers of sack at Whitehall before it came to overflow with brimmers of *kvass* in Moscow. Upstairs you see the nurseries, with the children's toys of more than 200 years ago. Among them are a tin horse of eccentric build and a wooden ball very neatly turned. But loyal Russians can here pay homage to the most homely relics of their former rulers, for in a glass case you are actually shown the slippers of a Czar and the nightgown of a Czarina. From the back windows upstairs you get a beautiful view of the river, and by craning the neck can just see the vulgar bulk of the huge new Nicholas Palace within the Kremlin walls. What a contrast between this modest, stuffy (for I am bound to report that the odours in it were heavy and hideous) little house, with its wooden fittings, its unpolished walls, and its comfortless knobby chairs and benches, and the great palace, with its marble staircases, its malachite mantelpieces, its mosaic floors, its inlaid tables, its massive golden thrones, and its array of halls, each richer than the other, in brocaded hangings of blue or crimson and gold! Some idea of the dimensions of this royal abode, built in ten years by the Emperor Nicholas, may be gained by mentioning that in the surface wall of the river front I counted seventy-eight large windows. But if we compare Michael Romanoff, the first dweller in this quaint, unassuming house, with the successors of his race who from time to time inhabit the gorgeous palace in a state of insecure splendour, we find the comparison not altogether in favour of the later sons of Michael's line. Michael's successors may have more windows in their house, but it is doubtful, alas! whether they have, as the Russians say, "more windows to let the light into their minds" than he had. The first Romanoff Emperor sprung from the Church. He was the son of a simple parish priest who rose to become metropolitan, and he succeeded to the throne of the Czars—a boy of sixteen—to pursue even among many faults, a life of virtuous simplicity and enlightened ideas under the roof where we now stand. When any of the present Czars visit this home of their ancestor in Moscow, they cannot delight to reflect that while the state of



the great majority of the country people—emancipated as they are—is very little, if at all, better than it was during the reign of the first owner of this house, the Czar himself is certainly now becoming more and more every day—

“Slave of the slaves that call him lord.”

When the traveller gets tired of the numberless churches and the snow-covered streets of Moscow, there is a short excursion to take out of the town which is worth coming all the way to Russia to do. It is to the Sparrow Hills, about four miles to the west of the city. You go there to get a view of Moscow just as you go to the Pincian to get a sight of Rome, or to the Seraski Tower for the marvellous panorama of Constantinople. The view of Moscow from the Sparrow Hills is frequently compared with these views, but there is no doubt that on the whole it surpasses them, and is perhaps the most brilliant prospect in Europe. Waiting for a fine afternoon, we go out to choose a sledge; in a moment all the *isvostchiks* are pointing to the desirable points of their respective turn-outs. One wishes you to feel the thickness of his sledge-rug; another, lifting the coat off his horse, ostentatiously indicates its good points; another shows an improvised foot-warmer in his vehicle, and so on. At last, half deafened by their shouting arguments, we choose a charioteer, and the porter brings out the encumbering paraphernalia always needed in Russia—rugs, wraps, greatcoats, with sketch-books, etc., which altogether take up more room than the passenger himself. As we drive off, the servant bends down and looks at the horse's feet. This is a Russian ceremony which wishes you good luck setting out on a drive or journey; it is a specially good omen if the person who bends sees all the four shoes of the horse, and the idea is that if your charger shows only one of its leather shoes as it dashes off you are sure to be upset or run away with. Our road at first skirts the western side of the Kremlin; its white crenelated walls, red towers, and gold domes are painted in brighter tints than usual by the sunshine. Crossing the Moskwa by the stone bridge, we see several immense loads of timber being dragged along the frozen surface of the stream in sledges consisting of a simple floor of wood without sides. The great beams are tied together by chains, pulled to the side of the river course, and anchored by the chain to the bank. Then, when the river melts in May,

they are there ready to be floated down the stream. Several million roubles worth of wood is annually floated down the Moskwa in this way. Crossing the bridge, on the right hand stands on an eminence the magnificent Temple of the Saviour, just finished after being more than half a century building. It is now almost the largest church in Russia. Its mountainous central gilt dome looks like some great gold balloon which has fallen and rested on the roof. Soon we are skimming over a long straight road, with various sorts of buildings on each side; now a low wooden house separated from the road by a white wall; now a church, with its five silvery domes tin plated, their roofing in shape and colour resembling the scales of a fish; then on the other side a cloister church with indigo blue domes studded with silver stars. In the outskirts of the city the churches do not seem able to "run to gold" (as an American would say) for their roofs. Indeed, readers must not suppose that all Russian church domes, in Moscow or anywhere else, are gilded. Most of them are green; whether this arises from rust on the brass, or is the original colour they were painted, it is hard to say. The church-owners like you to believe the former. Now and again we pass a garden about half an acre large. Some of its trees thrust their branches, white with ice and rough with hoar-frost, out over the high wall, and cast a skeleton-like shadow on the snow-covered footpath. On and on we glide over the glassy surface of the road, and it seems as if the houses and the city would never be left behind.

At last, however, the wooden buildings, which have been getting poorer in appearance, rougher in build, and dingier in their painted coats as we near the border of the city, stop all at once. We turn to the right, and are out in the open, with Moscow behind us. The country undulates in gentle swells, with miniature ravines between them. A large factory chimney appears on the south; its smoke is blown towards us by the gentle afternoon breeze; the woolly column and its feathery shadow flitting over the ground form the only stains on the blue cloudless sky and the white expanse of pure snow. Soon we have the road all to ourselves, and the *isvostchik* has to go slowly and cautiously in choosing his way, otherwise we might fall into a snow-drift six or eight feet deep. The depth of the snow is shown by looking at the fence which encloses the forest of birches and beeches on our right hand; only the tops of its posts are visible.

This wood, in which is situated a very pretty villa presented to the late Empress by Prince Orloff, runs with its interwoven network of branches right on to the Sparrow Hills. It is hard to imagine anything more lovely than a walk through such a Russian wood in the depth of a Russian winter. The thick stems of the trees are coated in a mantle of greyish white. The frost frames an icy fretwork in the branches, forming devices and strange zig-zag figures never dreamt of in Euclid or the higher mathematics. Sometimes the rain or the melting ice has commenced to drip, but is arrested by a frost reminding it that the time of thaws is not yet. Where this has happened you see hanging icicles, six inches or a foot long. They glisten in the sun like stalactites of transparent crystal, and beside them you see a bunch of infinitesimal ice needles, which the slightest breath will break. On a fine, still day nothing is more beautiful than to look up from the white ground through this inter-twining web roof of frozen white branches to the irregular patches of blue sky formed by their rigid lines. The silence of these Russian woods is very striking. The only sound is the crunching of the crisp snow under your feet, the small twigs cracking with the frost, or the soft thud of a slender bough falling on the ground. It seems hard to believe that these very woods which we drive past now will in a month or so be filled with the deafening twittering of the birds from whom these hills take their name. But in Russia the spring comes literally all at once; the trees and the earth make up for lost time, and do in two weeks what would take them twice as long in other climates.

I know that the spring has been more cruelly used by descriptive writers than even its deceitful lukewarm weather has used them; that it has been done to death as a peg for poets to string verses on to. In other countries we are sick of it, but in Russia the season does its work so promptly, and in such an unhackneyed way, that even it has a fresh claim for notice. That is my excuse for here quoting a short, vivid description of it by a Russian. I translate from one of the most famous Russian authors. "Nowhere," he says, "has spring such a charm as in Russia. The white shroud of winter succeeds at last in fatiguing the sight, and the mind longs for a change. Then the loud voice of the lark rings in the heights of the air, and all hearts beat with pleasure. The sun, with its quickly working rays, melts away the snow on the cots and

huts; with the heat the water begins to clamour and rush, and the husbandman, like the sailor coming home from the ends of the ocean, can cry out, 'Land at last.' The rivers break themselves, their icy chains, and flow in stately streams past their banks, and the most tiny brook runs as gaily as does the most magnificent river—a tributary child of the sea. The pale meadows, nourished by the beneficent influence of the snow, cover themselves with the soft down of fresh grass, and glow with azure flowers. The birch groves start into green, the thick forests echo with the hymn of glad birds, and everywhere the breeze bears sweet scents, and is laden with the aromatic perfume of the bird-cherry tree."

All this may be very true when it comes, but just now the cold is so great that the very sweat is freezing on our sturdy, thick-set horse's back. We soon reach the tea refreshment traktir, from which the best view of Moscow is to be had. Visitors are scarce at this season, and we have to wait impatiently while the "Traktirchik" and his man shovel a way into the house for us out of the deep snow. As we jump out our *isvostchik* mutters some words, the import of which we easily gather to be that he has no prejudice against partaking of liquid sustenance. "Very well, Sidor, you can have some tea." "If it pleases my high-born lords," answers the driver, grinning all over, and with a twinkle of his small grey eyes, "may I have schnapps instead, to warm the corner of my soul." This phraseology is, of course, irresistible.

We walk on to the verandah, part of which is roofed in with glass, from which you get an uninterrupted view to the east. The Moskwa runs below us, and takes a graceful curve to get round a projecting shoulder of the wooded hills. In the woods a mist is already rising off the snow; it is of that indescribable delicate mauve shade you often see in Russian thickets, and nowhere else. To the left, on the flat plain in front, lies the great fortress-like enclosure of the Novo Devitchi Convent. It is an immense block of buildings, with two churches with five large domes each, and a tall telescope-shaped belfry cvertopping them all. This convent is not warlike in appearance merely; it has withstood many a siege; its monks have often made sallies from it in company with soldiers; its bells have rung a call to arms as well as the summons to prayer; and its refectories and chambers have often been turned into barrack-rooms.

But, further back, beyond all this, is the sight on which all travellers have exhausted the dictionary in terms of admiration. The undulations of the snowy plains seem to have gathered themselves together into one long wave-line, which has been arrested just as it hung ready to break over the plain. Facing you, three miles away, all along the length of this low hill, you have the overpowering view of all the churches, palaces, and buildings of Moscow in one glowing mass. Topmost of all is the cross of the great belfry, and round it, like the jewels of a crown, are clustered the golden domes, minarets, and towers of the Kremlin. As you stand and look out on this sight towards sunset, it is impossible to imagine anything more grandly picturesque. Those who have watched a sunset on the marble mosques or carved palaces of Agra or Delhi, or the flat roofs of Cairo, can form some idea of it. As the sun gets lower, the spectacle changes every moment; the wide surface of white walls of Moscow reflects its light, changing from a pale yellow to a deep orange, and again into a faint pink red. Every now and then some dome which has been in the shade is suddenly found out, and, struck by the sun's beams, is wakened up into a bright dazzling globe of polished gold, as if a half-transparent drab cover had suddenly been lifted off it. Viewing these hundreds of crosses, domes, and coloured roofs, it is easy to understand the effect this sight of Moscow has on the impressionable feelings of the Russian peasant. To this day, when he views it from these heights, it is to him as the first view of the towers of Jerusalem was to the Crusaders. He kneels the moment the city flashes on his eyes, and crying out "Matouchka Moskwa Svataya!" (Holy Mother Moscow), touches the ground three times with his forehead, like the Turk in his mosque. It is easy, too, to picture the scene which took place here one bright afternoon in September, 1812. Napoleon stood here at the head of his army, inveigled on to their destruction by the artful retreat of the Russian forces. The soldiers, broken in spirit and half dead with the horrors of suffering endured in their long march, as soon as the glittering city—inviting to conquest—met their eyes, shouted out as with one voice, "Moscow! Moscow!" "All this will be yours" said Napoleon to his men. How this arrogant promise was never fulfilled; how the Muscovites, by a preconcerted plan and by a piece of noble self-denial, sacrificed their beautiful city to the flames; and how the

retreat from Moscow entailed on the great army the horrors of torture worse than could be devised by the most blood-thirsty mediæval tyrant, everyone knows.

We wait—as everyone does—till the sun has set on this wonderful scene. The city and its lofty towers are seen standing coldly out against the sunset's reflection in the eastern sky; the horizon background is of that strange greenish hue only seen in the northern heavens. Soon the evening mists rise, forming a steamy atmosphere of a grey violet hue. In it the domes and towers seem to quiver and float in the air, and to recede farther into the distance, and as darkness comes on they gradually fade out of sight, almost like the enchanted castles of some old fairy tale. We are soon brought back to practical questions by being called to pay the usual "Rubl adin" (one rouble) for our sip of tea. We know we are being cheated, but the view is worth far more than that; indeed, one cannot help being sorry when this afternoon's visit is over, and can only remind oneself of Heine's consolatory words to the sentimental young lady who sadly gazed on the sun dipping under the western wave—"Don't grieve, mademoiselle; it goes down to-night, but it will come up again to-morrow morning." Our five miles' drive home is very cold, and when we get into the streets they are ill-lighted by the few lamps; the houses carefully husband their light within their walls, and do not let even a spare ray gleam through a chink in the curtained windows and fast-closed shutters to redden the snow. As we drive past the Kremlin the burnished roofs which flashed so brightly an hour and a half ago are lost, sunk in the darkness; but when the moon rises they will shine out again over the pale snow, so as to almost rival the view you get of them from the Sparrow Hills, which is no doubt, in its way, the most magnificent of the kind in Europe, if not in the world.



## LAST LOOKS AT MOSCOW.

"EXHAUSTIVE" descriptions mean exhausting reading. If I were to give a full and particular account of everything in Moscow, these sketches would become as long as "Alison's History of Europe." If readers were to accompany me through all the extent of Moscow to try and find out everything of interest in it, their peregrinations would soon rival those of the Wandering Jew. The local tax-gatherer is said to be the only man who can find his way through the intricate by-ways and winding alleys of the city.

And yet in most out-of-the-way corners you will find something new to see. Turning into a rather tumble-down church in a remote, poor part of the city, late in the afternoon, I came in for part of a marriage ceremony. The bride and bridegroom were evidently poor people, and the dozen or so of their friends assembled belonged to the peasant class. The pair stood on a small mat placed in front of a little trestled table which served as an altar. This mat is interesting as being the counterpart in the Greek Church of the praying-carpet of the Mahomedan mosque. The officiating priest seemed to have dressed himself in accordance with the small fee he was likely to receive for tying the nuptial knot—he was bareheaded, and had merely thrown a shabby brocaded vestment carelessly over his ordinary black dress. On the table before him was a book out of which he read, not even taking the trouble to intone, as is the usual custom. Both bride and bridegroom wore bonnets, or rather round crowns of some gilt metal; they held in their hands between them a lighted wax taper. In the Greek Church this is the type of the spirit, and here it symbolised that their two lives were to be united into one mind and soul. The bride wore no veil over her face, but a small, plain white lace shawl hung down over her shoulders from the back of the head to the waist. The pair were next anointed with holy oil. Behind, on the floor, knelt the old mother of one of the parties in the attitude of a scrubbing woman; at every pause in the priest's reading she bent forward and touched the floor

of the church three times with her forehead. Her attention to her devotions was sadly distracted by having to keep tethered to her a little boy, clad in a diminutive *touloupe*, who wished to force his way up to the altar-screen, attracted by the blaze of the lighted tapers and the glitter of the gold on it. In this church I noticed a detail very seldom seen in Russian churches. From an inside gallery near the altar projected a row of carved gargoyles and griffins, such as you see in Gothic buildings. The grinning monsters stretched out their throats as if hissing at the pair before the altar, and if they had looked up at them they would certainly have thought the sight was a bad omen for the happiness of their wedded life. To make up for this, strangely enough the setting sun all at once sent in a stream of weak light, passing over the priest's head of long brown hair on to the screen, and giving the whole ceremony a most picturesque finishing touch. It is strange that these Russian interiors always are picturesque. You know that their architecture is nearly everything it should not be, there is a lavish display of bad taste and bad material in them, and yet for all that you like to linger in them, and are not forced to turn out in disgust as in many of the hideous gaudy Romish churches on the Continent. When the ceremony was over there was a good deal of promiscuous kissing on both cheeks of both parties by the assembled friends, the married couple got into a poor sledge at the door, and the rest followed them on foot to the nearest *traktir*. There the supper will begin by the bride's friends singing this song, or one like it, "O, our sister, may you be pure and healthy as the water—fruitful as the earth—red as the rose—and lovely as the spring." In an hour or so the whole bridal party will be "as drunk as Russians." Saturday is the great day for weddings, and the newly-married pair are always supposed to show themselves in church next day, where they not only receive congratulations, but gifts from all those who can afford to give them.

A funeral in Moscow of one of the poorer people is a sorry sight. A custom prevails not unlike the Irish wake. After leaving the grave an adjournment is made to a vodka shop. The party consists of all the mourners. The priest who has read the prayers over the grave is invited, and so are the men who have carried the bier. The whole company get as drunk as the funds at the disposal of the chief mourner (who bears



the expense) will let them. The more they drink, the more they think they are doing just honour to the memory of the deceased. I know on abundant evidence that this disgraceful custom is very common. The men who bear the coffin to the cemetery are nearly always tipsy before the ceremony commences, and when the rest of the bereaved ones stagger home to the house whence their dead friend has been borne, they are left under the tables in the brandy shop.

One place which must certainly be mentioned before I leave Moscow is the celebrated great Riding-school, near the Kremlin. This immense structure was, until the Midland Railway Station in London was built, the largest building in the world, supported merely by its four walls, without any pillars, piers, or other supports. It is now used chiefly as an exercise place for the soldiers when the cold is so intense that they cannot go through drill in the open air. It is 560 feet long, 152 feet broad, and over forty feet high. These figures are only approximate, as I do not pretend to the suspicious accuracy of the various guide-books on the subject, reminding one of the geography books which used to tell us that Mount Everest was twenty-nine thousand *and two* feet high. The riding-school is warmed by great white stoves. The space is so vast that 2,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry can easily go through their evolutions in it. It is used also as a place for monster concerts, for school feasts, and at carnival time for various entertainments. I have been in it then, when twenty great barrel-organs were performing their different *répertoires* at once to attract you to shows and playing-booths in almost as many different languages. The only other place in Europe where such aural agony can be inflicted on an unoffending traveller is the Wurstli Prater in Vienna on a Sunday afternoon, but there you have the protection of miles of open air; here the flat roof exactly doubles your torture by conscientiously echoing back the hideous sounds rising from below it.

Close to the riding-school is the University—a large white three-storied building, with two receding wings on each side of the central block. It is one of the youngest great universities of Europe, founded in 1755. Except for the study of classics, in which the University of Kazan is supposed to be the best, Moscow is the favourite academical seat of Russia. The State gives a subsidy to the University of about £60,000 a year. The number of students is about 2700. There are thirty-nine

regular and twenty-five occasional lecturers, and twenty-one tutors. There are professorial chairs in philology, philosophy, theology, jurisprudence, natural science, medicine, and mathematics. The library consists of 175,000 volumes, and there are well-filled museums for the study of zoology, mineralogy, geology, and other musty sciences. The students' fees are very low, and only amount to about £5 or £6 a year. It is no social distinction in Russia to be a University man; a great majority of the students I saw in Moscow were dressed like working men or tradesmen's assistants, except that they did not look as well fed or cared for. Most of the students are very poor, and have to work hard, giving lessons by the hour for a wretched pittance, or for eight or nine hours a day as writing clerks. Walking about the University, you get a good opportunity of seeing them as they hurry into the different lectures. In spite of the hard life led by many of them, they are, on the whole, a fine, good-looking set of young fellows. Poorly dressed as they may be, they have a clean look about them; they have not the bloated, course, beery look of many German university men, nor yet the slovenly, *negligé*, reckless gait of the fast French student of the Quartier Latin. Talking with the students, I was told that the great majority of men here pass their examinations, very few who present themselves fail. The Moscow students have the reputation of being generally hard readers. They do not lead the free life of most university students. This may be good in its way, but an evil effect of it is that the Russian student is much thrown on himself—he broods, and gets sulky and sullen, hence he is too ready to join in any rioting and insubordination to academic authority, often on most absurd grounds—a fancied political bias in the lecture of a professor or a slight raising of the fees. Another unfortunate feature of Moscow student life is that the young men do not indulge in any healthy pastimes or athletics. Cricket and rowing, of course, are unknown to them, but they do not even practise wrestling, boxing, or fencing, like other Continental students. Students told me that the only exercise they could take, except any compulsory military work, was an hour or so skating on Sunday afternoons. Even billiard saloons and tables are very few and far between in Moscow.

Most students who can afford it go for two years to Berlin University after leaving Moscow. From it they very often

return home thorough *Zapadniks*, or "Westerns," and they always like to be counted as members of a German rather than one of their own universities. One of the effects of this migration may be noticed by any one in Berlin. It is easier to procure all new Russian literature—novels, pamphlets, magazines, etc.—in Berlin than in any other city in Europe out of Russia. Besides the University, there are in Moscow many public schools and gymnasia, in which good preparatory teaching for the University is given. The fact of taking a University degree gives a man a title equivalent to what he would have in certain ranks in the Civil Service. This is called the "chin," and may be likened to our former legal title of "esquire." Among other things, its possessor must always be addressed as "you," in the plural, and not "thou." The present professor of history in Moscow (whose unaccommodating name I am sorry I forget) is a scholar of European celebrity and a man of wide views. I heard that in lecturing on ancient history he had earnestly recommended his class to read Lord Lytton's "Last Days of Pompeii" to give them a more vivid idea of details of Greco-Roman life than he could possibly give them. Among heads of other literary and artistic establishments in Moscow the best known in Europe is Professor Tschaiakoffsky, the eccentric and misanthropic, but influential principal of the Conservatorium of Music. In his own line he has done much for the reputation of Russia. But the Muscovites are not yet contented with their public institutions. A very large building, the Moscow Historical Museum, costing two million roubles, is the last addition to the splendid new buildings of the great city. It was covered with scaffolding when I saw it, and is not finished yet. The Russians have been wise enough to entrust this palatial mass to the design of an English architect, Sherwood; the result is that the building has a sober, sensible look among the half-barbaric structures crowding round it in the Chinese town.

One of the last sights we saw in Moscow was the famous ethnographic collection in the Rumiantseff Museum, next door to the University. This is the most beautiful modern building in Moscow, built somewhat in the style of a Greek temple. The ethnographic collection is simply an array of life-size, costumed wax figures, representing all the different classes of Slavonic peoples subject to Russian rule. You see also models or photographs of their dwellings and their cooking.

and farming implements. This seemingly innocent collection, when first exhibited some years ago, set all Austria by the ears with excitement. It certainly shows in an extraordinarily vivid fashion the number of totally differing types of mankind which Russia has managed to bring under her subjection. You see tall Chinese-looking figures dressed in green, with their cheeks coming down square to the level of the chin; little men from Finland in thick caps; women's effigies from Tiflis with head-dresses formed of a cloth flung square on their head like a towel; figures as broad as they are long of the dwellers in the tundras of the Samoyedi Northern Territory and Nova Zembla; some of the dolls represent men from Astrakhan, dressed in their own serge; others, Central Asian dwellers, with leather belt for too freely-used cutlass and firearms. There are models of the Kalmuck tents, the shape of a reversed tea-cup, except that the roof is round-domed; and kibitkas, another kind of tent, which folds up and has the roof more pointed. Above these models hang photographs of the most gorgeous palace-room in Europe—the Empress' drawing-room in the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg. It is hard to enumerate all the different peoples, models of whom and of their dwellings are displayed here. Reflecting on them, whether you admire it or not, you cannot help recognising the wonderful power of the Russian State system in welding this heterogeneous material into one national mass—done by iron-handed oppression and force as it may be. In her capacity for thus organising most widely-differing quarters of her empire into obedient parts dependent on one central power, Russia is the true successor to the policy pursued by the Roman Empire. The policy of the conquerors is the same as is the device of the eagles on the conquering standard.

When one at last leaves Moscow it is with great regret. It is as fascinating to study in detail as it is impressive in general appearance. It is impossible to avoid forecasting what the city may become hereafter. Will it be, as so many Russians pray, the seat of the representative Parliament of really Free Russia? or, when St. Petersburg shall have crumbled away into the encroaching waves, will it simply become once more the glorious capital of an orthodox autocratic monarch? or will it merely have its place as an important central commercial town in convenient connection with the great Russian capital of Constantinople? Whoever can answer these queries now can solve the Eastern or any other question.

## RAILWAY TRAVELLING IN RUSSIA.

"TIME was made for fools." These words might very appropriately be placarded prominently at every railway station in Russia. "Wait until the train stops," "Do not attempt to leave the carriage while in motion"—such warnings as these are superfluous in a Russian railway carriage. The traveller who commits these rash acts generally does so because he is in a hurry. But a travelling Russian and hurry are two incompatible conceptions. It is absurd to expect to find the two things connected. The Flying Dutchman stopping at a wayside station to give the passengers time for a stroll on the platform and a smoke; an Italian express starting without the blowing of innumerable danger-horns; or a Cobb's coach not finding some excuse for drawing up at the hotel as it passes through a country township—all these are easily realisable ideas compared to that of a Russian grumbling because a train does not go fast enough. Travelling is performed with an ample expenditure of leisure in Russia. To begin at the very beginning—scheme as you may, whether you leave a friend's house or an hotel for the railway station, you will always arrive there half an hour too soon—everyone does so. You have only to mention the magic words, "*K'stantsia*" (to the railway), to your *isvostchik*, and he then considers it *de rigueur* to at once spur his horse into a gallop, and no remonstrances or assurances that you have plenty of time will check his headlong pace. Arrived at the station, a porter or *moujik* meets you; you give him money, and he takes your ticket and registers baggage for you and brings you the change. It is only strangers to Russia who go through this ordeal themselves; if they do, they will find that, after a struggle at the ticket-wickets among a mob of greasy peasants (whose grease comes off), their clothes are fit only for a process of boiling-down at a tallow factory. One reason why you need to be over the mark in time for trains in Russia is that owing to the immense extent of the empire different railway systems run at different times. Thus, there are thirty-six trains which always run according to Petersburg time, seven keep Moscow time,

and others run according to the widely differing "time of clock" in Warsaw, Tiflis, and Ekaterinenburg.

But there is a romantic elasticity about the fares as well as the times of Russian railways. The cost of your ticket depends on the fluctuating daily value of the rouble. Suppose you are going from St. Petersburg to Berlin by the afternoon express. You ask what your fare will be before you start from the hotel. "Well, we cannot tell you what it is to-day, but here is what it was yesterday," is the answer. You act on this, but by the time you arrive at the station a telegram has arrived from Berlin, stating that owing to an unexpected shipment of silver from somewhere to somewhere, or from any other equally abstruse financial cause, the value of the rouble has been still further depreciated. As it goes down up at once goes your fare in a way to upset all the careful calculations you have made to avoid taking Russian money out of the country. Till travellers know that they must leave this margin to meet the eccentric instability of the rouble they are sometimes put to great inconvenience. From this cause once in a long journey in the centre of Russia we had to go through a process of careful living, if not of moderate starvation, for thirty-six hours. On some foreign bourse money had become "tighter," had felt "steadier," "easier," or "looser," had been "looking up," or behaving in some other irregular way. The result of its irresponsible action was that our ticket had become several roubles dearer. The railway authorities at the same time refused to look on a London and Westminster bank-note for £10 as anything other than a mere certificate of identity, too formal for a visiting card, not formal enough for a passport—monetary value they would not allow to it.

But even when you are comfortably settled in the comfortable carriage you may have other obstacles to overcome on the way, as we found journeying from Moscow to St. Petersburg. This is the "show" route in Russia; here you actually run (or should) 400 miles in fifteen hours. We left Moscow one dark evening in a snowstorm driven by a biting wind, which took away the breath as you drove against it. Our train for St. Petersburg leaves at eight o'clock. We start off with five long carriages and the luggage van. We roll on easily enough for an hour or so, then suddenly stop. Passengers get up to look what station it is, inwardly hoping it is one with a buffet where they may get a drink of mixed warm tea and brandy to

settle them for the night. But there is no station near, only the boundless deserted plain and the dreary snow falling fast, and the wind whistling between the carriages. We see the disagreeable truth—snowed up. However, this is the mail train, and so some of the guards manage to walk along the line half a mile to the nearest telegraph station, and send to Moscow for a relief engine to pull us out, which could be easily done. From Moscow comes back this extraordinary answer :—"It is now past ten o'clock, and too late to fit out another engine ; wait where you are till to-morrow morning, when you will be taken out." We are only twenty miles from Moscow now. Imagine a message like this being sent to the Scotch express (of which this line is the Russian equivalent) stuck up a few miles from London head-quarters. This message soon gets known among the passengers, and is received with indignation by the foreigners—English and German among us—but with amused resignation by the Russians. "What a very weak engine they must have given us !" is all they say. One Russian sticks up for his country, and assures us (in his own words) that "Everything goes beautifully on Russian railways till something goes wrong." It is only to show the easy-going way in which things are managed that I mention this incident at all. We wait where we are for the night. At daybreak the snow, which has been working quietly on while we enjoy a good sleep, is over the carriage wheels, up to the level of the doors. At ten o'clock an army of men and an engine come to unbury us, and pulling on slowly we soon find that we, the St. Petersburg express, have gone thirty versts (about twenty miles) in fourteen hours. At last we come to the first station, to find to our horror that after eighteen hours' fast there is no buffet at it. A moujik, however, has improvised a rough Samovar in the snow, and has brought a large tin of rusks. Passengers eat of them eagerly and angrily, as if to whet their appetites, and drink the tea, wishing it was something stronger. Yet another engine joins us here (three engines to five carriages), and our troubles are over, except that when we ought to be arriving in St. Petersburg we are only forty miles from Moscow, and ultimately we arrive at the capital some time in the middle of the night, fifteen hours late in a fifteen hours' journey, solely through want of promptitude and good management. The snowstorm has not been severe enough to prevent a reasonably powerful engine from pulling through a much larger train.

The line from St. Petersburg to Moscow is called the Nicholas line; it was built by that Emperor, whose private property it long was. The story of its construction has been so often printed that I tremble to re-tell it. Still, those readers who know it already may compliment themselves on being so well informed, and those who have not heard it before should learn it now. When the line from Petersburg to Moscow was first surveyed there was long and fierce dispute as to the exact route it should take. The towns of Novgorod, Torjok, Rybinsk, and others thought that, wherever the line went before or after, it should ultimately pass through them. Besides this, various engineers had as many different theories about the easiest practicable routes. The Emperor, tired of being appealed to by one side and the other, determined to put an end to the debates. He called for a map of Russia and a ruler. Finding out Moscow and St. Petersburg, he placed the ruler on the map and drew a straight line between his two chief towns. Returning the map to the astonished engineers, His Imperial Majesty said, "That is the route the line is to take, and let me hear no more about it till you report it is finished." One result of this autocratic "argument" was to make the line very costly. Swamps and rivers have been crossed where they were broadest, cuttings have been made where there was level ground a few hundred yards to either side. The only large town lucky enough to find itself on the line is Tver. All along you travel through a desert; most of the stations stand by themselves out in the fields, and in the distance you may see the buildings or smoke of the towns belonging to them. Between the town and the station is generally a road, which in winter is a stream of mud, a perfect slough of despond. The country on the Nicholas line, ugly and swampy near St. Petersburg, is pretty enough towards Moscow. You pass through several deep cuttings. In European Russia, where in all the thousand miles of rail there is only (I believe) about one tunnel, this in itself is a novelty. Much of the country is forest, and the firs and beeches look beautiful in the pale sunlight in their stiff white casing of hoarfrost. Now and then you pass a village. It consists of a mass of wooden houses, one or two buildings in stucco with walls painted yellow or orange and brown, and the church with its inevitable dark green domes. From the gable of every one of these village houses rises the dovecot, perched on top of a



most fifteen or twenty feet high. As the emblem of the Holy Ghost, the dove is directed by the Russian Church to be considered as a sacred bird; but I am sorry to say that for all that Ivan Ivanovitch is not entirely innocent of partaking of pigeon *piroghi* (pie) for his Sunday dinner. Near the village you may sometimes see the signorial house of the chief proprietor of the place. Some of the newer of these houses are very pretty. They are mostly built of wood, and their gables and roofs and verandahs are covered with a cornice of fretted woodwork most tastefully executed.

I may here remark (digressions may be pardoned seeing readers are accompanying me in the monotony of a Russian railway journey) that, whether it is from living in a land of forests or not, the ordinary Russian peasant is a born carpenter—more than that, a born artist in wood. Even in ordinary chopping of wood I have been astonished to notice the deft way they deal with unwieldy, shapeless blocks of timber with their small axes. They are as naturally good at this wood work as they are bad at farm labour. Russian agricultural labourers would be the despair of a fancy farmer. Till quite lately the farmers in the wonderfully rich “Tchornosep,” or black soil in the south of Russia, used to scrape the ground with a wooden plough hundreds of years old in design. Nowadays steam implements, almost forced on the people by the pertinacity of German commercial travellers, have put an end to more picturesque and patriarchal methods of tilling the soil.

Soon after leaving Tver we come to a great bridge, and all the Russians in the carriage rush to the windows and shout out “Volga, Volga!” Russians always get very excited about the Volga, just in the same way as, and indeed even more so than, the Germans do about the Rhine. It is here, at Tver, the stream becomes navigable, and you can take ship hence and sail down the giant waterway right away to Astrakhan on the shores of the Caspian, a distance of over 2000 miles. Even here, close to its source in the neighbouring Valdai Hills, the river is, I should think, about 200 yards broad, and is a stately magnificent stream.

Though it is true that there is very little of interest to be seen on Russian railway routes, the Russian railways make up for this as much as possible. Let it be understood, once for all, that though they may be slow, Russian railways are by far the most comfortable and luxurious in Europe. Given plenty of

time, it is a pleasure to travel by them—fatigue and worry are reduced to a minimum. The carriages are all well warmed by a very simple system of hot-water pipes. In many of them you can regulate the amount of heat by turning a small handle like that of a gas-meter. The carriages are generally very long, as there are very few sharp turns on Russian lines. They have a passage their whole length, and, as a rule, on each side of this, compartments which you can shut off by a sliding door. They are very seldom crowded, and two persons can nearly always get a compartment to themselves with a seat for each, which is long enough to lie down on almost at full length. The second-class carriages are really as comfortable as the first. The only difference I could notice was that they were fitted up in grey or brown felt cloth, while the first were covered with the finest velvet, crimson on the northern lines, rich green on the Polish and southern lines. The first-class is chiefly filled by the enormous number of people who seem to have free passes in Russia, military men, officials, and others. In the warmth of first, second, or third-class there is no difference, but this you find throughout Russia. The *isba* of the peasant must be warmed up to the same temperature as the palace of the monarch, or in a Russian winter death would be the result to either occupant. Travellers are always courteously treated by the officials. If they desire to play cards, for instance, a small table will be brought into the carriage for them and covered with the orthodox green cloth.

The railway stations are everywhere most comfortable and convenient. There is plenty of room in them, and they also generally realise Mr. Ruskin's ideal of a railway station—a place out of which you can get as quickly as possible. The stations on the Nicholas line have been most extravagantly built, and are beautiful buildings, looking more like country palaces than the "temple of discomfort" such places usually are. They are oblong, one-storied buildings built of wood, and the four corners are rounded off. They stand as an island between all the lines. They have platforms at each side. Down trains pass on one side, and up trains on the other, so that there is no mixture of traffic or confusion. Russians are extremely proud of their railway stations, and they have good reason to be so. We have much to learn from them in these matters.

The traveller in Russia is well looked after as regards meals. Every now and then the train stops for a few minutes; then

every one gets out and drinks tea. In the severe climate this is almost necessary to warm you up, and it is impossible to imagine anything more fragrant and refreshing. If English railway companies could supply the exquisitely-flavoured and perfectly-made Russian "tchai" (tea) at their refreshment bars, they would do more in the cause of temperance than half-a-dozen rabid Rechabite orators in a year. For meals you make longer stoppages. At a Russian railway-buffet you sit down with as great leisure to dinner as in your own house. The stoppage is generally for forty-five minutes or an hour, sometimes for more. There is no man at the door doling out your time to you with fiendish accuracy, as in other places on the Continent, and no jarring bell to remind you that you have just three minutes more before you have half finished scalding yourself with the hot-water soup.

In order to understand the luxurious ideas Russians have in travelling, let me describe an ordinary restaurant station on one of the great lines. You come to a station for dinner, we will say. It stands away out in the fields by itself, sometimes the nearest village is ten miles away, and till your train comes up it must be one of the most deserted places to be thought of. On the platform a man stands to show you towards the restaurant, and you find yourself in a very large room, splendidly lighted and warmed, and prettily decorated. There is a gorgeously-dressed servant in uniform to open each door for you, and when you get inside you are happy to find that there is not the suspicion of a draught in the place—a consideration when it is cold enough outside to almost freeze the steam the engine is letting off. According to the size of the station there are one or two tables about forty feet long in the middle of the room. They are beautifully set out and laid; the linen and silver would do credit in cleanliness to a private house. Along the table at intervals are raised in pyramids bottles of wine of all countries, and many of those innumerable Russian liqueurs of which I have before spoken. Their different coloured glass, labels, and capsules, look quite gay. These pyramids of bottles are about a yard in diameter at the base, and I must say that with a Russian company at table the way in which they disappear is marvellous. I would not have believed that so many bottles could be emptied in so short a time; but you see the proof of it in the rapid disappearance of the symmetric geometrical form of the pyramid-masses.

Even though it is the middle of winter the tables are covered with large bunches of flowers ; these are set in little heaps, two or three feet square and eighteen inches high, in a foundation of a beautiful soft green moss. These flowers give a very pretty appearance to the room. At these stations you get a splendidly cooked dinner for one rouble and a half (3s. 3d.). If you are still hungry you can have a *riabchik*, a beautifully flavoured white-fleshed sort of grouse, for one rouble extra, the cheapest game for its quality to be found anywhere. You can drink Russian beers, the wines of the country from the Caucasus or the Crimea, the champagne of the Don, and good foreign wines, such as Bordeaux and Burgundy and many brands of French champagne, at very moderate prices. The service is such as you can only get in Russia—a good-natured waiter to every two or three persons. All the waiters wear spotless white cloth gloves and a silvered chain round their necks. What a difference between a meal of this sort and eating a dinner against time, say at York, or the agony of bolting a chop of the Tertiary period at a West of England station. Along one wall of the room is the tea-counter, spread out with its array of glass tumblers and a large brass Samovar holding several gallons. You turn on the tap and help yourself. Taking tea with lemon is said to be a Russian custom, and very likely it is, but I do not remember seeing anyone take it in Russia. Besides this large room there are in many other stations, such as the great Junction of Tchemerinka for instance, many other rooms ; cosy and comfortable smoking-rooms reached without going outside along the platform, lavatories where you can get a good wash, dressing-rooms, and rooms comfortably fitted up with well-cushioned bed-couches, where you can lie down and rest for several hours waiting for your train when you have to change. All this comfort is as a matter of course ; you are not charged anything extra for it, and can enjoy it all whether taking a meal at the buffet or not.

But in many of the stations which belong to a considerable town there are other objects of interest to look at when you have finished your dinner. There is a sort of shop at one end of the room ; on a counter are displayed the wares and choice articles of manufacture of the neighbouring town. You can here have your pockets emptied of roubles, and in return your travelling bag filled with specimens of painted wood ; Russia leather, dressed in many ways, and splendidly embroidered with

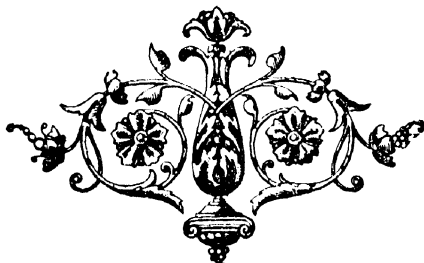
gold ; brocaded slippers, made for Russian feet—an area which gives ample scope for a lavish show of most exquisite work ; steel ware, and many other tempting mementoes. There is also a counter with Parisian and the famous Russian confectionery, encased in beautiful boxes ; another for tobacco, with about fifty or sixty different varieties of cigarettes in gaily pictured glazed boxes ; and a large bookstall, in which the newest French novels and the latest number of the Paris *Petit Journal* have always the most prominent place. At many of the stations, in addition to this, you find a book-hawker—an anomalous thing in Russia. We asked one of them at an inconsiderable station what book he sold the most copies of. On a little pressure he told us it was Zola's *Assommoir*, of which he sold on an average one copy a day to passing travellers. So much for the prospects of French realism in Russia. But Zola's works are spotless purity compared to many filthy and prurient works I have seen openly hawked at these stations. It is impossible to understand how, of all people in the world, the Russian authorities allow this disgusting nuisance to continue to the extent it does.

At all stations you are reminded you are in a country where outward display of religion is at a premium, by the chapel or shrine in the corner of the great room. All Russian travellers, hungry as they are, walk reverently up to it before proceeding to attack their meal at the table. This shrine is often itself the size of a moderate room, it is shut off from the rest of the floor by a wooden wall round it about four feet high. In general shape the chapel shrine is not unlike a small church with the pew-doors shut and the inside seats and divisions taken away. The sacred picture stands under a domed canopy of wood, often of oak, beautifully carved. There is always a lamp, and often several tapers burning round it.

The only discomfort on Russian railways is the necessity of taking precautions against petty thefts. As soon as you know the ways of the country you always leave one of the porters in charge of your things when you leave the carriage even for a few minutes, and he guards them for a few copecks. Everyone does this who has travelled any time in the country. But the thieving is not always what should be called petty. On one occasion, shortly before the journey I have above spoken of, the Moscow train arrived at St. Petersburg without the luggage-van. It had been stolen on the road. The guard in

charge had detached it as the train went along; he had peasants in league with him who helped to unload it; they then together ran it back empty to the nearest station, shunted it there with a story of accident, and went back to divide the spoil. On another occasion the theft was worked this way. The guards threw out the luggage as the train passed unfrequented places between distant stations. Peasants were placed along the line to pick up the luggage; they kept it for the ingenious guards, who visited them soon and gave them part of the plunder for a reward.

I know that these occurrences are quite true. At the same time it is only fair that each traveller should speak as he finds things, and after travelling about 2000 miles on Russian railways we never lost anything either from carriage or luggage-van. Thefts, too, are generally said to be becoming less common on all the great lines. I should add that in Russia, on the immense length of lines, all trains are run on the principle that a train is not allowed to leave one station before the train preceding it has arrived at the next station. With this provision for safety we find an extreme rarity of collisions. With their unrivalled comforts and luxury and their moderate fares, there is no doubt that in all points, except speed, the Russian railways are models to be copied by all other countries in Europe.



## ST. PETERSBURG.

THE best *recipe* for enabling anyone to form a general idea of St. Petersburg is this. Take the largest squares, places, and streets you have seen in any great cities anywhere; enlarge them by multiplying their dimensions four or five times, erect on each side of them great high houses, large enough for prisons in New Caledonia or for hospitals in Panama, then cover these houses over with stucco ornamentation and pillars and gilding, to make them look as like palaces as possible, put all these buildings on an immense area as flat as a board, and you may imagine you see St. Petersburg. Calcutta has been called the city of palaces, but compared to the magnificent Russian capital it is a city of ante-rooms. St. Petersburg is, without doubt, the grandest capital in Europe. Everything is on a colossal scale. Great armies could perform their evolutions in the squares, and the population of a kingdom could circulate without crowding in the splendid streets. The city is an astonishing evidence of what can be done in Russia by well-directed and never-wavering application of energetic power. A little more than a century and a half ago the space now covered by mountainous masses of masonry was a swampy morass, on which the only specimens of architecture were the huts of a few fishermen or hunters of bears, elks, and wolves, which still afford abundant sport within a few miles of the capital. The surroundings of St. Petersburg add to the overpowering effect which the first sight of the giant city has on every traveller. It arises up all at once—when approached by land—out of a malarious marsh, dotted here and there with unhealthy stunted birch and fir trees, whose attempt to form a forest makes their wretchedness more noticeable. Arriving at the Moscow line station, you come straight out into the Neffsky Prospect. This is the finest street in Europe, or perhaps in the world. It is about three miles long and fifty yards broad. On each side the grand buildings are arrayed to the height of four or five stories, their roofs usually being in a straight line.

I do not mean to weary my readers by giving them a detailed description of the plan of St. Petersburg. This would form as

interesting reading as a proposition of Euclid without figure or letters, and would entail on their brains a fatiguing amount of ideal construction. All that you want to know to find your way about in St. Petersburg is that from the great Admiralty Square the three "Prospects" radiate down through the city. These are the Neffsky, the Peas, and the Ascension Streets. Behind the Admiralty Square runs the broad stream of the Neva, bordered by magnificent granite quays with carved parapets; and on the opposite bank (the north) lie the thickly-populated islands formed by the numberless arms and branches of the river as it forces its way out to sea. Some idea of the scale of the buildings, and the setting in which they are placed, may be gained when I say that the front *façade* of the Admiralty is an uninterrupted line of building a quarter of a mile in length. The square in front of it is a mile and a half round. To the right of this square is the Winter Palace, standing at the edge of the river. It is the largest palace in the world, and in some ways one of the most gorgeous, though good taste is sadly absent in its design and decorations. The Vatican at Rome is said to contain 2500 persons belonging to the Papal household. The Winter Palace can and used to accommodate 6000 persons when the Emperor and full court had their seat there. At the back of the palace is another immense open space, closed in on the south by the semi-circular line of the enormous offices of the General Staff, as they are called. This block of building is also nearly a quarter of a mile long, and in the centre it is pierced by a gigantic archway, surmounted by a great bronze group of Victory in a car drawn by six horses, in reality the size of large elephants. Between the Winter Palace and the General Staff stands, in the middle of the place, the famous Alexander column. It is a shaft in one block of beautiful rose-coloured Finland granite. It is the greatest monolith erected in modern times; it has cost over £400,000, or about £1000 a ton. The height of this splendid pillar is eighty-four feet, and in any other city it would be conspicuous from far and near. But here you would not imagine its height to be anything extraordinary, so dwarfed is it by the great structures which the eye meets on every side surrounding it. One of the great drawbacks to appreciating the true size of buildings and objects at St. Petersburg is that you can never find anything small enough as a standard to measure by; your feeling is very similar to that experienced



the first time you try to gauge the dimensions of St. Peter's at Rome, or when you find in the Alps that what appears an ordinary shrub is really a fir with a stem large enough to form the mast of a ship.

It is this extravagance in everything that is your first impression of St. Petersburg. It becomes strengthened every day you stay there. Extravagance of space in the city, extravagance of size in its buildings, and a reckless extravagance in expenditure of money in constructing them and fitting them up. St. Petersburg acts as a huge sucker on the revenues of the Russian empire. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are unhesitatingly spent on a new museum, a new palace, or a new state office. Peter the Great designed his city "as a window through which his subjects could look out on the rest of Europe," and there is no doubt he was determined its frame should be large enough. The ambitious Czar's dream has been realised in a way that he would hardly relish if he were to revisit his city. St. Petersburg has become so Western—so European, in fact—as to be almost denationalised. As far as the outward appearance of the place goes, if it were not for the Slavonic letters on the shops, you might fancy you were in France or Germany. One reason of this is that almost every building in the city has been designed by foreign architects; any designs of the Russian architects have been simply copied from French or German models as nearly or as badly as possible. Here you are done with the quaint Mongolian domes and the mad colours of Moscow; everything is rectangular and commonplace, despite its size. The buildings are all ornamented with stucco—ornament in intention, hideous disfigurement in result—and full advantage has been taken of its fatal facility. It might be expected, therefore, that in St. Petersburg, grandiose as it is, there is a complete absence of the picturesque. It becomes monotonous to let your eye wander, day after day, over great masses of houses which have nothing to distinguish them from the great masses of houses next to them, and so on as far as the sight can follow the long line of the broad streets. Another strange effect of the vast outspreading of St. Petersburg is that the city always seems wonderfully empty and deserted. There is such a waste of room everywhere, that what would look a crowd in Paris or London here appears as a mere handful of people. The distances are immense everywhere, to cross a street is a

consideration, and to cross a square is a small journey. Every one who can drives in St. Petersburg. There are 25,000 sledges on the streets in winter. Even the poorest people will drive home in the evening; they will deny themselves almost any other expenditure in order to be able to do this. Late in the afternoon you will often see a poor woman, whose worn cloak would be but a meagre covering in a warmer climate, striking a hard bargain with an *isvostchik* to drive her home a distance of a mile or so for a few copecks. In the higher classes it would be almost a social disgrace not to keep a horse and sledge. The vehicles are as cheap here as in Moscow, but, as a rule, the commoner ones are not so well horsed.

Grand or monotonous as different people may consider the outward aspect of St. Petersburg, there is no doubt that it is the model city for the creature comforts of indoor life. If in the streets you experience the temperature of the poles, in the houses you enjoy that of the tropics. The warmth indoors is just what it ought to be; always comfortable, and not too hot. A fire is sometimes seen in a St. Petersburg *salon*, but, as a rule, the fireplace is filled with a beautiful show of ferns and flowers. The windows of all the rooms are double, and the space between the sheets of glass is sprinkled over with sand. This in some way has the effect of keeping the windows always transparent, as it prevents the frost from beautifying the panes with its erratic designs, and adding to the obscurity of the rooms. The rooms of St. Petersburg houses are usually very large and lofty. This is all the more surprising, as house rents are very high. But in the winter season at St. Petersburg money seems no object to the crowd of pleasure-loving Russians who flock into the capital. They do not care how much they spend to obtain the luxuries and comforts which they always insist on having in return. English ideas of comfort are more completely realised in St. Petersburg than in any other Continental city. Russians will often use the word "comfortable" in describing an abode to you in St. Petersburg. "We use the word because we understand the idea," said one of them to me there. But there is here a lavish idea of comfort, at first surprising to more modest English tastes. You enter, for instance, a good restaurant, and ask for the bill of fare. It is often a book of many pages, bound in red velvet plush. The wine list is a puzzling long catalogue of the different wines, with vintages arranged in chronological order,

like the members of a dynasty. Two persons have a servant each in a good establishment, and often one customer has two to attend on him alone. These are merely small details of life, but it is a multitude of such details brought daily to your notice which go to make up that Oriental luxury of living and splendour of surrounding which justified the great Russian writer, who knew St. Petersburg well and loved it little, in calling it "Our Palmyra of the North."



## ABOUT ST. PETERSBURG.

A GREAT man has said that any road, if you only follow it up far enough, will lead you to the end of the world. But this remark would be found untrue if you proceeded to verify it at St. Petersburg. In it your road would soon lead you on to the Neffsky Prospect. Once arrived there you would be quite content to stop where you were and leave the rest of the world for future visiting consideration. The Neffsky Prospect is one of the world's great shows, to which you gain admittance for nothing, simply by taking the trouble to go and look at it. It is to St. Petersburg what Regent Street or the Strand is to London, the Kartner Strasse or the Graben to Vienna, the Corso or Via Nazionale to Rome. It is so characteristic that without it St. Petersburg might as well change its name—it would not be St. Petersburg any longer. You are constantly finding yourself in this street; it seems to lie in your way wherever you are bound for. If a stranger who had been only a few days in St. Petersburg were set down in some out-of-the-way quarter of the city, blindfolded, turned loose, and told to walk about, his feet would of their own accord carry him on to this "great artery of traffic"—which praise, I believe, is accepted as the proper one by which to describe a street anywhere. This magnificent roadway would appear to greatest advantage as the scene of some gorgeous pageant or stately procession. As you look at the great houses on each side of the street, with their Corinthian columns, their classical cornices, and their massive basements, you cannot help thinking what a suitable setting this place would be for the Triumph of some old Roman General. But this thought is only momentary, for St. Petersburg is too prosaic and modern to encourage romantic retrospect, or to lend itself as a background for antique imaginings. Instead of the ivory triumphal car, you see the more useful and convenient, and certainly the more comfortable, tramway car, which will roll you along the whole length of the street for the sum of 2½d.

St. Petersburg is the precocious child among cities, the youngest of all the great capitals of Europe. I wonder whether

readers at first sight comprehend the immense mental relief these words imply for the traveller who comes to see its sights. In Rome, Athens, or Constantinople, to appreciate what you see you must carry about in your head the painful weight of a knowledge of great events during the last twenty centuries. You have to be "historically intelligent" for all that period. But the history of St. Petersburg extends over about a century and a half. Another thing which takes a weight off the faculties of a jaded or lazy traveller is that for once you are in a place without ruins, "interesting remains," etc. Only those who have studied them know what a tax a ruin is on one's intellectual powers. A ruin implies that you have to read or hear when and why such a building was put up, and by whom; and when and why and how often it was destroyed, and by whom. Then you have to rack the brain with the theories of different *savants* as to what the different parts of this tumble-down heap of rubbish formerly were. For instance, was this room the audience hall of a palace or the wine cellar of a tavern? Is that old hollow bit of iron the remnant of an ancient sacred sacrificial vessel or of a wash-tub, or is it merely the lid of a Birmingham kettle left here by a picnic party ten years ago? Then there is the toll of admiration which ruins exact from you as you pass them for their picturesque state; on analysis this will resolve itself into clinging ivy, which makes the place useless for the archæologist, and flitting bats, which destroy its tranquillity for the artist. It will be seen, therefore, how much time and trouble you are saved in St. Petersburg by everything being as yet in a state of tolerable repair. There is another last advantage of the northern city. It would be a disgrace for a traveller not to know who built, say, the Campanile at Florence, or St. Paul's in London. But in St. Petersburg, while you marvel equally at the immense size of the buildings and the frequent utter want of taste displayed in their design, you need not trouble about the name of their architect. As a rule, he has contrived to make his building not so much a monument for himself as a tomb for his artistic reputation.

But St. Petersburg is such a dignified, imposing place on the whole, that it is easy to forget to criticise any indifferent details in its palatial structures. "Size will tell," and you must admire it for that, even if for nothing else. If you were to take the sulkiest traveller you could find, when he was suffering from an acute attack of *ennui* or Russophobia, and set him

down on the Neffsky Prospect at eleven o'clock on a bright winter's morning, he would be charmed into good nature and admiration, and compelled to admit that whatever the Russians cannot do they can at least make a city. On such a morning the scene is one of the brightest and most cheerful that can be imagined. Everything is beautifully clean looking. There is no filthy mud to wade through, and no wheels to spatter it over you and make you curse the inventor of vehicles. The broad street is covered with the sparkling spotless snow; the sledges rush along over the level ice surface as steadily and gracefully as swans in the water. Many of the houses, too, are painted white; most of their roofs are flat, but any few you can see have been carefully blanched by the snow to prevent them making a leaden blot on the picture. Overhead a sky of the palest possible blue is seen through a flaky film of milky mist. It is as though you were looking at it through a thin cloud of white smoke. The sun shines steadily and brightly, and you recollect how far north you are by seeing that it keeps very much to one end of the heavens, as if trying to make its day's journey as much of a short cut as possible. To your left flashes out almost as white as crystal the golden dome of the beautiful Kazan Church, while farther away on the same side you see the giant one of St. Isaac shining high up in the air above everything else, its brilliancy tempered by the distance of intervening atmosphere. Looking northwards up the Prospect, the view is grandly closed in by the immense mass of the Admiralty, with its beautiful spire which is one of the finest objects of the sort to be seen in the world. The exquisite airiness and lightness of this spire render it hard to believe that its vane at the top, in the form of a three-masted ship, is 250 feet from the ground. It rises from a square gallery on the roof, flanked by columns and statues. Its shape must be likened to that of a boy's carefully sharpened slate pencil. It is gold-plated, and wherever else in the city it may be cloudy, the Admiralty spire seems always able to attract some of the sun's rays to set it off. When the sun is getting low, it gleams in the darker afternoon light, and rests so easily on the great block of building below it that it looks like a giant's golden arrow, which could be easily sent off shooting straight up through the air.

Neither the "intelligent foreigner"—Russians know this phrase, and are always ready to joke about it—nor anyone who

wants to know about St. Petersburg can pay too much attention to the site of the Admiralty in the city. Its position tells as much as many chapters of history. When Peter built his capital he designed the Admiralty as the great central point from which the three great prospects, parcelling the city out into four parts, radiated. Neither the Palace, nor the Bourse or Exchange, nor the great military barracks, were to be the distinguishing features of St. Petersburg. Peter's dearest dream was to make his city a seaport, and his people a nation of sailors. St. Petersburg was to be essentially a naval station. Hence the all-important part of the city must be the naval dockyard and its attendant buildings. It was the office for marine affairs—the Admiralty—which was to be most conspicuous of all buildings; it was to it that all streets led, and it was thither all the population of the city would most easily find their way. The idea was a fine and happy one, and has been well carried out. It is one of the many points which make you admit that it is only after seeing St. Petersburg that you can fully understand how true and well-founded are Peter's claims to be styled "the Great."

There is one important subject on which a visitor to St. Petersburg can have his mind exercised and his views enlarged. In alluding to it here, I merely reflect the results of observation on the spot, and reproduce conversations I have had with many Russians on the matter. It is by visiting St. Petersburg in its frozen winter state, that a foreigner can learn to tolerate or sympathise with that eager ambition of Russian statesmen and Russian people—their desire to have one real seaport for their immense country, and their hitherto unsatisfied longing to have somewhere a shore of their country by a sea which shall be a real liquid sea—not a hard ice-field—all the year round. The energy of Peter in building St. Petersburg for a seaport, the expenditure of money, life, and labour which has reared the capital where it is, do seem to have met with but half their due reward, when we see that the city is as tightly bound in with ice for half the year as if its foundations had been laid on the North Pole. In winter it is hard to remember that water is ever visible from the place at all. The Neva is frozen four or five feet deep. When you cross it towards the north, and drive over the miniature archipelago of islands, you do not know where frozen land ends and frozen water begins. The long quays which in summer are busy with unloading of cargoes and

ringing with noise of traffic, are almost silent and deserted. You may see a wooden barque or two cased up in the ice for the winter, or you may hear the noise of some iron-casting at Baird's works, but that is all. As far as regards the use of the sea, the city might be hundreds of miles inland. The founders of St. Petersburg knew, of course, that this would be so, but they had no choice of any other site. Odessa and the Black Sea ports are not to be depended on in winter. When I was in Russia, passengers for Odessa were shipped into sledges, and driven fifteen or twenty miles over the Black Sea into the town. You always feel, that looking out to sea, St. Petersburg's winter aspect is cribbed and confined. You may start from the grand city by railway, and travel thousands of miles through the length and breadth of the world-like expanse of Russian land, but you cannot get sea room or sea water enough to sail a child's toy boat. What wonder, then, if the Russians long to have the beat of the waves of the free navigable ocean, instead of the hemming-in ice chain, on some edge of their territory. They get most enthusiastic in telling you they will never be satisfied till this desire has become an accomplished fact. The "colossal glacier power of the North" will never rest till its feet are bathed and melted in the sea. The tremendous weight of the Russian Empire is coming on with a slow but sure pressure downwards and southwards to the warm sea. All the powers of Europe cannot prevent this irresistible advance; it is as easy to arrest the sliding of the great Alpine glaciers in their sloping beds. On the southern seas—Indian or Mediterranean—so much land will, sooner or later, find its way to water. "We think we can stand pretty well on land now," said a Russian official to me in St. Petersburg; "we want to see whether we can manage to swim in the water as well." "We think that we have as good a right to acquire a seashore as any other nation. They should recognise that it is idle to try and prevent us doing so; the best thing they can do is to let us fulfil our mission quietly, and in the way that will be least hurtful to them. With the immense capabilities of Russia as a producer of raw material—capabilities at present only half developed—our merchant navy might soon become one of the first in the world. As our wealth increases, the commercial element of our nation will soon become as powerful as our military element, and we will be all the more wary of indulging in that fighting which now you think us so eager for.



Let Russia once reach the *Ægean* Sea or the Persian Gulf, and half of the misunderstandings between her and foreign nations will vanish."

These are not political sketches, so I make no comment on the above views. I can answer for it that they are very generally expressed in ordinary average conversation whenever you touch on the subject, as I always tried to do. Not only do Russians think thus, but I found that many English and German commercial men in St. Petersburg practically agreed with them. You hear these arguments maintained at houses, by your travelling companions, and in the hotels or *cafés* over your cigarettes and *alisch*. At the same time, in one of the latter places, if you were to glance at the leading article of the inspired local newspaper lying on the table before you, you will generally there find views enunciated in direct antagonism to those you can hear expressed by word of mouth all around you. I repeat that the considerations I have quoted in the last paragraph are most impressively borne in upon any unprejudiced visitor to St. Petersburg in winter. He will have to admit that it is, as we say familiarly, "rather hard luck on" the Russians, that for half the year their vast country cannot afford a single sea harbour, for those about the Danube mouth are of little use. Whether we sympathise with, tolerate, or oppose Russian aims in these matters, it is as well to know what they are, and the real reasons which prompt them. And though it is an unpleasant thing to say, it is quite true that one cannot return to England from Russia without being shocked at the great public ignorance displayed of the national affairs of Russia. This ignorance is all the more astonishing, as our easily and sometimes unreasonably aroused antagonistic feeling to Russia should invite us to study every detail of the country and people we can possibly acquire knowledge of.

Meanwhile, readers who are not too tired by the foregoing paragraphs can obtain a striking confirmation of some of the facts in them if they will walk with me up the Neffsky Prospect towards the Admiralty. Stopping to look in at the print and picture shops, or at the photographs in Daziaro's window, they will see that the picture of a ship, or of the sea, always attracts the greatest attention. Most Russian passers-by stare at it rather than at the Parisian actresses, at the coloured portraits of the Emperor, with his thick heavy under-lip, or the beautiful and charming Empress, so like our own Princess of Wales, or

at the fine reproductions of the splendid gems of art in the Hermitage gallery. You notice this hankering after things nautical and marine pictures equally in other cities of Russia. In the modern galleries at the Hermitage it is the marine pictures of the Russian artists that attract most gazers. Aivazoffsky and an attendant school of native imitators have gained great popularity by dealing almost exclusively with the sea as a subject for painting. I shall have a word to say on their pictures hereafter.

Gradually, the crowd on the broad pavements is becoming denser. All the business people and officials are leaving their counting-houses, warehouses, and bureaux to go and take lunch. St. Petersburg does not rigidly follow the French fashion of early forenoon *déjeuner*. Most people lunch at one o'clock, or at any rate between twelve and two. In St. Petersburg everybody lunches at Dominic's, on the north side of the Prospect, about a quarter of a mile from the Admiralty Square. When I say "everybody" lunches here, the phrase is, of course, manifestly untrue. But it is just as true as the assertion which a London gentleman of unimpeachable veracity will make to a friend whom he meets in a West-end square in the middle of August. He will assure you that "everybody is out of town" at the very time when some four million pair of human lungs are engaged in making the air of the city more unbearably sultry every minute. In the same way it must not be supposed that all the 650,000 inhabitants of St. Petersburg who are attacked by the gnawing of appetite at midday crowd to satisfy the same at this place. What I mean is that if you meet a friend in the street and go to lunch together, you naturally turn towards Dominic's without saying a word about it; if a person parts from you saying, "Well, I'll see you at lunch," to reply "Where?" would show you were quite a new-comer, for of course he means at Dominic's. Any Englishman who has been at St. Petersburg will recognise the homely phrase "a steak at Dominic's" as smacking more of the St. Petersburg pavements than any Russian sentence five times the length. When you enter the famous restaurant, though you do not go there for that purpose, you find your faith in the truth of Biblical history vastly strengthened. You can, for the first time in your life, fully realise the difficulties which prevented its contractor and clerk of works from completing the edifice of the Tower of Babel. The room here is always full of hungry and talkative

people, talking in many varieties of human speech. Shouted greetings, in different languages, from friends seated at different tables, cross each other safely. You almost wonder that the extraordinary articulated sounds ejected from throats of various nationalities do not collide in the air and produce a concussion which will break the panes in the double windows. You hear a good deal of Russian spoken, from the soft, drawling, but beautiful St. Petersburgian to the coarse-tongued, rough-throated country dialect, every word of which sounds like dreadful swearing. It is when you hear this latter that you first believe that, after all, there must be some truth in the story of the enthusiastic student of Russian, who had all his back teeth drawn, in order to pronounce properly the sibilants and gutturals of the language. Amid all this you can sit at a table (as I have several times) where you hear the purest Yankee twang from some of the American operatives in the Telegraph Department. They are as a rule most obliging and intelligent men, but I met several who had been three, six, or even nine months in St. Petersburg, and had hardly learnt a word of Russian. Yet they had got on very well and without much inconvenience, owing to the polyglot capabilities of the Russian city people. St. Petersburg is the very city for the indifferent linguist, for there are sure to be many people who can speak his own tongue. For an accomplished linguist it is a paradise for practice. He can exercise himself in speaking any language he has at his disposal. This national catholicity, if I may so call it, is what attracts strangers to Dominic's, or similar places of hunger-quelling resort, but it is not limited to speaking alone. You can here read the *London Times*, the New York paper (I think it was the *Herald*), or the Russian *Journal de St. Petersburg*. This last is generally alluded to as "semi-official" in the English and foreign press. In reality, it is no more official than the other Russian journals. Except the clandestinely published ones, all Russian papers are in reality official, inasmuch as all have to be submitted to official inspection before publication. The *Journal* is certainly, however, the recognised organ of the Foreign Office, which pays expenses (I was told) and makes some profit besides from its advertisements. From a literary point of view, this oft-quoted journal partakes of the qualities of the material from which the paper it is printed on has been manufactured. This is putting it as politely as possible, and if the description is

uncomplimentary the excuse is that it is true, as anyone who has read the sheet for a week will admit. It has no news, and it sometimes forgets to put in the hours of the theatres, entertainments, and concerts, which is all you buy it for.

You can tell in a St. Petersburg restaurant, such as this one, that you are in a great business city. Men hurry off from their lunch without waiting long for a lounge or a smoke. How they manage to get through any exertions after the meal they take may be left as a matter for scientific experiment by the local doctors, and for admiring amazement by strangers. Fashionable and idle St. Petersburg is not yet preparing to come out in its afternoon splendour, and make the Neffsky Prospect, for an hour or two, the most dazzling promenade in the world. This we will look at in our next chapter.



## AFTERNOON ON THE NEFFSKY.

No one could guess what is the most striking feature of the Neffsky Prospect when it is at its gayest and most crowded. Not its gaiety or its crowds, but its silence. This is what first strikes you as most singular. This comparative noiselessness is even more impressive when you look down on the street from a front window on the second or third story of a house. You see the swarming black sledges beneath passing to and fro as thick as ants and as swift as swallows, and you instinctively listen for the noise which should accompany so much motion. But a St. Petersburg winter has banished wheels, and with them their roar and rattle, and as you stand on the pavement a sledge will pass you rapidly, with no other warning than a slight whirr. Except the silent waterways of Venice, no place is so much of a dumb show as St. Petersburg in winter. This absence of noise and bustle is a most delightful sensation, and as the ears are relieved from the unwilling duty of listening to jarring sounds, the eyes seem all the more eager and pleased to enjoy the bright scene before them.

About three o'clock the sledges fill the breadth even of the Neffsky Prospect. The sober slow tram in the middle of the road divides the traffic. On each side of it seven or eight rows of the flying vehicles rush along, those going down the street keeping on the south side, those going up, on the north. The rate at which they drive is simply astounding. To cross the street anywhere between the Admiralty Square and the Gostinnõi Dvor (bazaar), is an impossibility. There are no collisions, though the *isvostchiks* take some of the closest shaves imaginable, and seem to consider it "bad form" to pull in going round any corner. It is said that in London fifty-six persons are killed and injured weekly by street accidents. This number would be far surpassed in St. Petersburg if it were not for the wonderful agility of the horses, and the skill of their drivers. After a short career in a St. Petersburg sledge, a good Russian horse should be quite qualified to make a successful *début* at a circus. It can do anything. It can pull up in almost its own length when going full speed, it can turn the sledge

round as if it were a turnstile or fixed on a pivot, and it can spring off at once into a free, swinging trot without jerking the occupants out of its sledge. The horse carries hardly any harness, and such impediments as bearing-reins and saddles and other useless trappings do not cramp its movements or hide its fine build and proportions. In St. Petersburg (I was informed by a banker there) a fine Orloff horse will easily fetch £400 or £500. If a gentleman takes a special fancy to a well-bred trotter for his pet sledge he will give far above that amount. A Russian who has money does not mind how much of it he spends to make a display.

But if you want to form an idea of Russian luxury and lavish expense, look at the appointments of some of the sledges round you. Where would the flashiest equipages of the Bois du Boulogne or Hyde Park be beside them? Here is a double-seated sledge, with two ladies in it, dressed for calling. It is one out of many like it. The horses are beautiful greys, with long, unclipped tails and manes. The fur rug covering the *isvostchik* on his small front seat would be envied by a leader of fashion anywhere to trim her dress. But the splendour of a Russian *isvostchik* of a good family in his every-day attire almost equals that of an alderman's coachman on Lord Mayor's day. He wears a great loose coat, reaching to the feet, called a *kaftan*. This is made of the richest dark blue velvet. It buttons under the left arm, so that as he drives it looks as if made of one piece. This *kaftan* is sometimes covered with gold brocade, and at the waist is always bound by a pretty belt, either red or gold, with patterns of flowers or geometric devices stamped on it. The *isvostchik's* cap is also of dark blue velvet and fur, and sets off his face, with its long, brown beard, very well. With a coronet in place of the cap, this Muscovite *jehu's* dress would easily make up into an English peer's festive robes for state occasions. The apron rug for the ladies, on the back seat, is of still finer material than the driver's. It is often of a thick, red fur, the spikey hair of which is two or three inches long. As for the cloaks of the fair owners of the sledge, they are simply the *ne plus ultra* in that style of covering. Ladies fortunate enough to possess such furs must pray that it may be always winter. A striking feature about these sledges is a long blue net, which is tied to the horses' necks, covers their backs, and is fastened down to the front of the sledge. The ice on the street is covered with

a powder of snow, and this net prevents flakes and chips of ice being thrown up into the face by the horses' hoofs. The chains and rings of the harness are sometimes of real silver—this is a fact. They are often gilt. The forehead band, bits, or buckles are often jewelled. Some of the sledges have little silver bells, but they are not usually carried on the Neffsky. The money lavished in fitting out a well-appointed sledge in St. Petersburg would buy two or three carriages and horses elsewhere. But as I have said before, almost every one drives in St. Petersburg, so that to distinguish oneself from the rest of the horse-drawn public requires an extraordinary amount of display. St. Petersburg is not yet as bad as that most upstart of little capitals, Bucharest—where it is highly impolite not to drive everywhere; but still, you see occurrences in it almost as ridiculous as that of the London exquisite who sent a quarter of a mile for a hansom to drive him to a party next door.

But if it is an easy matter to describe the fine St. Petersburg carriages, when you proceed to do the same for their fair occupants you come to that point where the pen of the writer must be thrown away as inadequate, and the pencil and brush of the artist be taken up in its place. Only the eloquent delicacy of a Frenchman writing in his own language, which they speak so perfectly, could do full justice to these Russian beauties. The St. Petersburg artist in search of "types of beauty" will only be embarrassed by the rich field of choice presented to him. To get a reputation in the Russian capital as a fashionable beauty must require a nineteenth century Venus. It is no exaggeration to say that in the fashionable promenade of hardly any city in Europe (except perhaps London in June) will you see so many beautiful women as on the Neffsky in winter. The beauty of these Russian ladies is not of the healthy, robust, apple-cheeked type. It could hardly be so, seeing that as a rule they take little exercise, eat many sweetmeats, smoke cigarettes, and drink plenty of champagne. But though the head is small, their features are beautifully formed, and the flat, broad-nosed Moscow type is gone. Their complexion is wonderfully pale, almost colourless, but of great delicacy and transparency, and it serves to throw into more bewitching contrast their wonderfully fine dark eyes, which are a warrant alike for the feverish verses addressed to them by their own poets and the more critical admiration bestowed on them by every traveller who has seen them. It must be remembered,

too, that a Russian lady in out-door costume charms solely by her face. Elegance of figure is wrapped out of existence by thick cloaks, mantles, and muffs, into which the arms can be thrust up to the elbows, and a Cinderella foot is encased and libelled by the shapeless and ugly, but warm and necessary, galoches. It must not be supposed that female beauty is confined to the wealthy or higher classes alone, for every now and then you will see a woman of the people—a workman's wife or a tradesman's daughter—who could hold her own for face and feature with her counterpart in Rome, Vienna, or Paris. Looking at the Neffsky Prospect when it is thus transformed into a "garden of fair women," somehow the idea will come up that if we were living a few centuries back in the world's history, and our rulers quartered a regiment of English celibate guardsmen in St. Petersburg for a few months, those brave soldiers would soon find not only the "Russian question," but themselves also, "settled" in a speedy and pleasant manner.

The Neffsky supplies abundantly that class of persons who really are most important anywhere in making a fashionable promenade a success—those people who go to see, onlookers for those who wish to be looked on. Pedestrians keep to the sunny side (the north of the street). Many gentlemen drive up in their sledges, get out, and walk up and down for half an hour or so, and then drive off to the club or to afternoon tea in the *salon* of the reigning eccentric or beauty, as the case may be. The crowd on the pavement is almost wholly a male one, and most of the men are faultlessly dressed. You see generals or military men displaying all their medals on their breast; this habit is characteristically Russian, and seems the fashion here. Then there are many *Tchinoviks*, or officials, who seem to be able to get leisure for an afternoon stroll here. They wear green caps, and a mark on their shoulder of the same colour tells their exact grade. You see fashionable young men in well-cut tweed clothes, whose great ambition is to look as like an Englishman as possible; they go the length of discarding the slovenly knotted necktie of the French style for the flash coloured English cravat, with a breastpin of the horseshoe or champagne-bottle pattern. Then come past you a group of three Germans, smoking execrably bad cigars (for which there is no excuse in St. Petersburg). If they happen to laugh very loud, or to take up too much room walking, you may, if you listen, hear a Russian swear at them as "zapla" (heron.) For



some reason which I do not know, the Russians give the Germans the nickname of "heron." As you walk up and down here in the afternoon, it is almost exclusively French you hear spoken. Go about the Bourse, or along the English quay, in the business hours of the forenoon, and you will find German chiefly in use. These circumstances tell their own tale. French is the language of the drawing-room, but German is becoming more and more every day that of the counting-house.

When your eyes get tired with looking at the darting sledges, you can rest them on the splendid shows in the shop windows. Any one who thinks the shop windows of a great city are unworthy of attention is surely mistaken. They are the abstract and brief chronicles of the industrial development, taste, and civilisation of the place. They give you a better idea of the wealth of the city than many pages of statistics. Here the shops are striking at the very first from their enormous signboards. The letters over a Russian shop are generally three feet to six feet long. The description of the wares inside is written on the windows in three or four languages. But in the Russian Empire only one out of every twelve persons can read, so there is always a picture signboard as well, making the matter plain to the most unimaginative eye. For instance, I have seen a boot shop whose keeper did not consider it sufficient to have the picture of a boot painted—he had depicted also the image of a naked, unshod human foot beside it. To such a length is this picture advertising carried that I actually saw in the Garden Street a book-shop with a picture of an open book over the door, to let the *moujik* who could not read know that inside he might buy books. The most interesting, because the most Russian, shops here are the clockmakers. You see all the minerals found in Russia, whose number you never cease to wonder at, utilised in the shape of ornaments, clocks, paperweights, inkstands, thermometers, and other objects. These are made of malachite, lapis lazuli, onyx, a sort of bloodstone, and many other beautiful materials. In the jewellers' windows you see examples of an exquisite class of work which the clever Russian craftsmen have copied from the East. Golden jugs and goblets are strewn over and embroidered with a running thread of gold in most complicated yet tasteful Damascene patterns; in the knots and loops of this thread are sewn plentifully turquoises, rubies, and garnets. The finish of this

work is unsurpassed by anything seen even in India, and accounts for the very large sums paid for examples of it. I priced a small beaker not much larger than a wine-glass, and found its price to be 1000 roubles (£100). You also see many specimens of beautiful enamelled ware, in making which the Russians, it seems, will ultimately surpass all their Oriental competitors. A great deal of the gold used in these articles comes from the mines in the Oural Mountains. It is very light in colour, only a small quantity of copper being used for the alloy. Walking farther down the street, opposite the Kazan Church, you come to a window in which great pyramids of bright crimson and blue boxes are piled, and attract your attention fifty yards off. This is the shop of Lamba, the great cigarette maker. Russians tell you these are the best specimens of the article to be had in the world. They are a cigarette-smoking nation and should know. In St. Petersburg it is said that you can, if you like, smoke about 200 different varieties of cigarettes. Going on farther, we come to the well-known "Passage." This is simply a short arcade which is held out to you as one of the sights of St. Petersburg, and is supposed to be very brilliant in the evening, which it may be by the exercise of some charitable imagination. It is not half such a tempting show as either the Burlington Arcade or some of those in Melbourne. A detail to be noticed (only a detail, but it is in these details you recognise you are in the Neffsky Prospect, and not in the Boulevards or Bond Street) is that the most of the shopkeepers here adopt a system of more or less fixed prices, saving a purchaser the intellectual wear and tear of much chaffering. Also, it is fair to state that in St. Petersburg shops the announcement, "Here is English spoken" (as the phrase is sometimes quaintly transposed), does not necessarily mean "Here is a den of thieves," as it so often does across the Channel.

Between four and five o'clock the sledges leave the street, and with them the *flâneurs* and idlers on the foot pavements. As the sun goes down the street assumes that cinder colour which is a peculiarity of grey, cold St. Petersburg. There is no city in the world which is so dependent on a crowd and traffic to make its winter aspect endurable. About six o'clock again the footpaths become enlivened with the officials and *employés* hurrying home from their work. Nowhere do you see such

energetic walking at such a fine pace as that displayed by these gentlemen. Everyone walks quickly on a St. Petersburg evening; the searching, killing cold acts as a spur to urge on the most easy-going pedestrian. Most of the men have gone through their term of military service, and stride on, erect and stiff, with well-measured marching step, as if the eye of their superior officer was marking every movement. After six o'clock you may wander through miles of streets, and find them almost deserted. Even the principal thoroughfares are very poorly lighted, and a walk through St. Petersburg after dark is melancholy, lonely, and depressing enough. At the door of the large buildings you will see the *dvornik*, or house-porter, sitting wrapped up in a sheepskin large enough to form a horse-rug. He has also to perform the duties of a night watchman and policeman for the house. He is, as a rule, a very "knowing" individual, and has ample leisure to study human nature and meditate on his studies during the eighteen hours out of the twenty-four on which he seems to be constantly on duty. It is he who, with all a Russian's native diplomatic wile, can drive away "duns" calling for the poor student inhabiting an empty room in the attics; he can (and will for the reward of a rouble or two) facilitate the unobserved entrance of a distinguished officer to his female flame, who lives in the best apartments on the first floor; and he knows exactly when the guests at the supper of a wealthy lodger have become riotous enough to require a hint from him, preparatory to the visit of some of the secret police to search for a "suspected" reveller.

If the streets are quiet in the day time, they are oppressively so in the evening. The sledges taking parties to the theatres at half-past seven or eight move noiselessly about like gondolas. They do not carry lamps, and their occupants do not speak or laugh as if going out to enjoy themselves; it is too cold for that—their mouths are covered with a great fur coat collar or with their muffs. The shops shut between eight and nine o'clock, and then, unless it is one of the marvellous moonlight or starlit nights of St. Petersburg, you cannot imagine a drearier or more deserted place till seven o'clock next morning than the capital of Russia.

## ACROSS THE NEVA.

‘NEVA! my own Neva! golden-coloured river, thou resemblest a flowing yellow ear of corn,’ etc., etc.’ So sings a Russian poet, who then proceeds to inform St. Petersburg’s stream that it flows strong and stately, and that it will ultimately find its way to the blue sea—with other truistic remarks of the sort usually addressed by poets to rivers, which can be filled in by any reader for himself. But the enthusiastic bard did not make allowance for his statements being rendered utterly false by the work of that severe artist whose everlasting hobby it is to paint everything over with a coat of white—the Winter. As you look down on the frozen stream in winter, it does not look golden at all. The poet should have given us an alternate version, in which he might have represented the stream in its terror at the approach of the icy season, turning “as white as a sheet,” for that is its real colour now. The lake-like river, spanned by three or four great bridges, looks—viewed from a height—like some gigantic slab of alabaster marble, crossed here and there by darker veins. Its river is perhaps, after all, the grandest sight of St. Petersburg. There is a most effective but simple way for preparing yourself to appreciate its grandeur on the first view. Start for a walk from the bottom of the Neffsky Prospect; here is as large a street, flanked by as large buildings as you can see on a street anywhere. Make your way on till the Prospect opens out into the Admiralty Square; there you must confess you never saw before anywhere such an open space with such a huge building forming one side of it. By this time your eye has got used to largeness of view, and you are prepared to be disappointed with anything that is not on a colossal scale. Now push on and stand on the quay overlooking the Neva. You are even yet unprepared for the breadth and magnificence of the view, you have to admit that such a splendid river flowing right through a great city is not to be seen elsewhere in Europe. The Neva is here more than a quarter of a mile broad at its narrowest part. Standing on the quay on the south side, right opposite you, is the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, the citadel of St. Petersburg. Its

light-red brick walls look quite brilliant in contrast to the pallid ice below them. They thrust themselves out into triangular points like a starfish, and form a pleasing break in the straight line of the river banks and the parallel lines formed by the quays and the roofs of the buildings above them.

Within the fortress stands the cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul. It has a tall, slender, gilded spire of pyramidal shape, which is the most prominent and characteristic object in all St. Petersburg. With an unsurpassed boldness of design, it rises straight up in the air to an immense height. At the top of the spire is the figure of an angel standing erect, holding above it a great golden cross. The top of the cross is 370 feet from the ground, a greater height than that of St. Paul's in London.

To the left (the west) of the fortress a branch of the river—the Little Neva—forces its way out to sea, or rather will do so in a month or two. Then with its lumpy fragments of broken ice the river is for a few days neither land nor water, and in a state as puzzling for fishes who have to swim in it as it is awkward for man who has to cross it. At last, however, the liquid element prevails, and the rippling of water against the prow of ferry-boats replaces the scraping of the sledges on the ice. To the left again of the Little Neva appears the Vassili Ostroff (Basil's Island), formed by this offshoot of the stream and the broad main branch of the river on which we are now looking down close to the Winter Palace. The river is here made a little narrower by the shores of the Ostroff pushing themselves out nearer to us, as if anxious to show off the splendid buildings on them more prominently by bringing them nearer the view of the Palace windows of fashionable St. Petersburg on this side. At the corner of this Basil Island is one of the numerous and striking watch-towers of St. Petersburg, which serve as perches from which warning is given of both fires and floods; this one is also fitted up as a lighthouse. Beyond it, forming a splendid river frontage, are a number of the most magnificent buildings in the capital—the Bourse, the Custom-house, the Academy of Sciences, the University, the great Mineral School, and others. All these great buildings are about the same height, so that their sky-line is on the same straight monotonous level so characteristic of St. Petersburg. The eye wanders every now and then to the glittering spire of the fortress, just to have the pleasure of looking at some object

which is higher than its surroundings. This cataloguing of the buildings of St. Petersburg, with the remark that they are large, may appear tedious to readers. But so it should, for that is exactly the effect produced on a spectator by the buildings themselves in reality.

Beside the Academy of Sciences is a strangely incongruous monument, the Rumiantseff Obelisk. It is a shaft of fine black marble, and shines in the sun like a piece of polished ebony. It is so Egyptian in shape and character that if you came on it standing by itself you would, for a moment, fancy you were on the banks of the Nile, instead of the Neva, and would look round expecting to see dhayabeeas on the river instead of sledges, and the flat roofs of Cairo instead of the gilded spires and cupolas of St. Petersburg. But this is not the only object which would look in better keeping with surroundings elsewhere. Beside the Custom-house there stand two columns, 100 feet high, adorned with beaks of ships in the regular old Roman fashion. Accustomed as one is to see these "rostrate" columns under the blue sky and surrounded by the thick cypress of Italy, they do look as if they had been pitch-forked into their place here in the cold bare north. But Russians have no sense of suitability of surrounding in these matters. They would, if the whim took them, thrust a Gothic spire through the roof of a Tartar building, or—as has been spitefully said—place a statue of Justice over the front of their law courts.

Looking up the river, as far off as we can see it makes a turn almost at right angles. At this corner stands the Arsenal of St. Petersburg. It covers a large space of ground with its great barracks, and commands the river in two directions. From here we can see, on the platform in front, a pack of the black iron watchdogs of the city—great cannons. With these guns sweeping the Neva, St. Petersburg need never have any qualms as to her defences from sea-coming enemies. Even the stoutest ironclad which had managed to brave or elude the bristling batteries of Cronstadt would think twice before she rounded the point of the new Admiralty, and laid herself open to fire from these formidable iron mouths.

The first time you cross the Neva is generally to visit the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul in the fortress. You reach it over a tumble-down temporary bridge formed of lighters stuck fast in the ice. In summer they call this a bridge of

boats—rather a complimentary title for these unshapely tubs, each one of a different height from its neighbour. Your sledge slides uncomfortably up and down over them, as if it were a boat itself in a head-wind. At the end of the bridge you pass the sentry-boxes and drive up a short winding road, with brick walls on each side like a railway cutting, into the fortress. In front of you stands the Cathedral; its golden spire is elongated and heightened enormously by its thinness. It seems to spear the flying clouds about it, and the golden cross at the summit and the angels' outspread wings flash like a mirror in the sun. All around you and beneath are guard-houses, prisons, and dungeons. A few stunted trees at the back of the church thrust out their grey, icy branches like the antennæ of a many-legged frozen insect; they attract you as the only objects around here which seem to have escaped being cut and dressed into a merciless military precision of line. The sentries all stand as if they were jointed wooden anatomical models; a man stacking a small heap of wood close beside me with leisurely care is showing a most amusing anxiety to prevent a big splinter or crooked twig from projecting beyond the rest of the stack, and even the snow which has been shovelled off the paths has been patted down with the spade into flat-fronted heaps on each side of the footway, all in a perfectly straight line.

Many political prisoners are confined in the prisons here, and very sinister stories are whispered as to their treatment. It is very hard to find out how much truth there is in what is said on this point, for almost no power will procure a stranger permission to visit the cells. An order for admission must be granted by some extraordinarily influential person, if not by the Emperor himself. When I was in St. Petersburg foreign ambassadors were powerless to obtain one. Whatever the facts really are, it is certain that many unprejudiced persons, who ought to know, have believed that some of these State prisoners are subjected to secret tortures in their dank and gloomy cells. Of one thing there is no doubt—the state of many cells is a torture and slow death in itself. There is a row of them immediately outside which flows the Neva, and its unhealthy viscous water trickles and oozes through their walls. In a former article I spoke of the facilities afforded by Russian prisons to prisoners anxious to escape, and though there are very few chances of getting away from this well-guarded fortress

still several most ingenious escapes have been effected. These exploits are considered by the Nihilists as great feathers in their cap.

The Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul in front of us is the burial-place of all the Emperors of Russia (with one exception) since Peter the Great. It might therefore be imagined that this church, if not even grand or imposing, would at least make an attempt at solemnity. But it is of bad architecture and bad taste, and is gaudy and commonplace in the extreme. It is strange that the late Czars should prefer this place as their royal mausoleum to the spot where all their forerunners are buried in the quiet of the holy Kremlin—the Archangel Church at Moscow. There the church is filled with the simple stone coffins, over each its rich velvet pall; the floor is paved with jasper, the walls and pillars are covered with figures of the saints painted in the richest colours and gold, and the gorgeous screen, with its twisted golden columns and gems of many hues, glows with subdued splendour in the solemn light. Here the church is a glaring white, the tombs are square cases of perfectly white marble, and the sacred frescoes on the walls are replaced by a row of musty captured flags which seem to smack of gunpowder and may have reeked with blood. The grave of Peter the Great stands by the entrance at the side door. Above it stands a gold-covered image of St. Peter. This picture is more interesting than at first sight might be suspected. Its artist and goldsmith did not rack their brains for an appropriate conception of the figure of the great apostle. They had an easier task. The picture was to represent the exact size of the infant Czar. Judging from its dimensions, which are said to be accurate, Peter's nurse cannot possibly, without an everlasting stain on her conscience, have declared to his royal relations that he was a "fine big boy." The next most interesting tomb in the church is that of the late murdered Emperor, Alexander II. It stands on the left-hand side, not far from the screen. It, and the graves around it, look as if they were in a conservatory rather than a church. Within the railings which separate them from the nave are rows of green plants and flowers, in pots and baskets. Alexander's grave is strewn with several very large green palm branches, and covered with wreaths and bunches of flowers. Among these is prominently placed a wreath sent by our Queen. Fresh flowers were constantly being placed here, even though the Emperor



had been dead a considerable time. And here it may not be uninteresting to remark that in many different places in Russia I found among people I talked to a constant reverence and affection expressed for Alexander II. "Ah, he was a great man, a grand man," many have said to me, accentuating the adjectives as only Russians do. You hear the same praise of him—whether genuine or not—from landed proprietors, even though they have been considerably impoverished by his great act of emancipating the serfs. The only other thing to notice before leaving this church is that over many of the tombs are placed the keys of cities that were conquered by the Czars in their lifetime. On one of them is the deceased monarch's wedding-ring.

From the fortress you drive to Peter the Great's cottage, in which is his famous boat, built by himself. There are many sledges at the little gate already, although it is still early in the afternoon. The cottage consists of a short passage, and on each side of it a good-sized room. The place is crowded to suffocation, and that although it is no holiday or any special occasion, but just an ordinary Thursday afternoon. In Russia, however, a room soon gets filled. People are so padded up and covered with layers of great-coats, fur cloaks, and other articles, that the bulk of the ordinary human figure is increased to double the dimensions of a man dressed in usual European out-door clothes. The *touloupe* also of the moujiks (of whom there is a great crowd here) is tied so tightly round the waist that its greasy, half-tanned, dirty sheepskin, reaching to the level of the knees, sticks out all round them like a male crinoline. Their dirt is at once their protection from elbowing and their passport through the thickest crowd. They make their way easily anywhere; you like to keep a sanitary cordon of a few inches of fresh air between your own garments and their odorous bulk. Through this melting tallowy crowd we crush in to have a look at the boat. It is painted a dark dingy brown; its build may be best described as a cross between that of a canoe and a gondola. The most lion-hearted sailor would prefer to restrict his cruise in it to merely river navigation. Still, it is wonderfully well and neatly built—its ribs as well bent and the boards of its gunwale as neatly turned as many a craft of the modern river waterman, and the only clumsiness observable is in the nailing together of the beams. It is one of the most interesting national relics to be seen

anywhere, and you are forced to admit that if the Great Peter had not been its Czar he would have been certainly the best carpenter in his empire, and would have made as proportionately great a reputation at the joiner's bench with a plane as on the throne with a sceptre—even though he was too ready to exchange this royal article for a whip.

In the little passage stands the bench the Czar used to sit on, and in a glass case a model of a ship, and a mouldering old hat which he used to wear. It must be anachronistically described as of the "wideawake" pattern. The room opposite is so crowded that it is literally impossible to pass into it. Standing at the door we can see at the far end lamps lighted, a long-bearded priest dressed in a thin black velvet gown, and can hear the chink of money thrown into a box. Of course a service is going on. I say "of course" because you soon get used to this kind of thing in Russia. Before you have been in Russia you would be surprised to learn that there was any necessary religious accompaniment to such an exhibition as that of an old boat. But after you have been in Russia a short time you learn to take it as a mere every-day occurrence to find sacred church services performed in the most unexpected and secular places. You would hardly open your eyes wider to see a chapel placed among the cages of the wild beasts in the zoological gardens. The reason is not far to seek. These services always imply the passage of coin from dirty but lay hands into equally dirty but clerical ones—a "collection," in fact. No ecclesiastical performance in Russia is complete without the collection. I hasten to correct cynical readers who may remark that this is not a peculiarity of Russia. Russia is the only place where a collection is the be-all and end-all of a service. In fact, it often seems to form the whole service. The collection is considered "something religious" by the Russian peasants, just as much as it was by the drowning sailors who could not pray in the threadbare old story. "No pay, no prayer," might well be written up over every Russian church as a motto equally appropriate with many others which do command our just respect as we read them on the walls. It must be remembered that a Russian will never pray except to and before a picture. The better reputation a picture has, the more a prayer prayed before it is worth in money to the lucky owner and in likelihood of fulfilment to the paying worshipper. Hence the church, on the slightest excuse, or on no excuse at

all (at this cottage for example), will stick up a picture. Then with a lamp and a priest the money-sucking establishment is complete. The amount of money taken at this cottage of Peter the Great is very great—some thousands of pounds annually. People (who perhaps know nothing about its everyday conduct) gifted with an undue amount of Christian tolerance for the Russian Church must not think that the view I here present of it is too scoffing or prejudiced. This openly-practised gold-grubbing idolatry must be the most distasteful of elements to all visitors when they see it in a church whose loud boasting of its purity of doctrine is only equalled by its orthodox detestation of all other branches of Christian faith. The more you see of things ecclesiastical in Russia, the less do you wonder at the more educated classes looking on their national Church with feelings of sceptical indifference or undisguised and amused contempt. You understand how the popular belief has arisen that it is a bad omen to meet a pope (priest) if you go out for a walk or a drive, an omen the ill effects of which the Russian counteracts by immediately spitting on the ground—I have seen them do it often. You begin to appreciate the grim irony of the incontrovertible fact that though you are in the capital of “holy” Russia, you might as well expect to meet any ordinary member of the clergy at a gathering in one of its drawing-rooms as a scavenger off the streets. But the picturesque little cottage of Peter the Great is too unoffending an object to form a text for a long sermon on this subject, so we force our way out, and after tugging at our *isvostchik’s* arm to waken him, we skim cheerfully off over the ice. The sparkling snow on the broad surface of the Neva glistens like a field of diamonds in the afternoon sun. The air is delightful; cold, crisp, and exhilarating. We soon get out to look at the fashionable promenaders on the quay, and then a walk in the Neffsky and a large tumbler of priceless tea at Leinner’s charm one into that state of entertained admiration which is the proper mental condition for the stranger in St. Petersburg.

## A GARDEN IN THE SNOWS.

"If you want a pleasant change from our cold streets, and would like to understand the liberal way in which our Government can spend money, go to our Botanical Gardens." This strange bit of advice was given to us by a Russian gentleman in St. Petersburg, and we did not regret acting on it. "Surely there is nothing extraordinary about a botanical garden!" readers will exclaim. But they must remember that in a St. Petersburg winter a garden seems as great a novelty as an iceberg would in the Sahara. We are in a city where the mercury lowers itself to a most improper depth below zero in the thermometer, where the frost can split open great beams, and cracks and nips off massive stone cornices on the houses as if they were crusts of clay. As you walk about day after day, and see the bare grey trees in the squares, you begin to forget that it is one of their peculiarities to be sometimes green. When you saunter, or rather "do," the fashionable promenade along the avenues of splendid beeches and birches in the miscalled Summer Garden, you almost doubt whether a season will ever come when the howling of the icy north wind (and a wind in St. Petersburg does seem ice in a gaseous state) through their outstretched gaunt branches will give place to the sound of the "lisp of leaves." Their wintry, bleak country explains the great love the Russians have for flowers and things green. Those who can will go to any expense to have them surrounding them. I have heard of a family in St. Petersburg sending to their estates in Moscow government for flowers for a grand ball. When in the capital we go to see the Botanical Gardens we are becoming Russianised to the extent that we are simply giving way to the Russian feeling of longing to see some verdure among the whiteness of universal snow. Our excursion is "quite the thing" for a winter afternoon.

Accordingly, we walk out on to the street, and, standing still for a moment by the side of the pavement, happen to look at our watches. In a moment we are observed, and two sledges bear down on us. The sea-gull does not swoop down quicker on its fishy prey than does the St. Petersburg *isvostchik* on a

probable "fare." Some one has said truly that if at any hour of the day or night, in the most deserted part of the city, you were suddenly to cry out "isvostchik," you would at once be surrounded by two or three sledges coming up to you noiselessly, like spirits evoked by a magician's spell. But now, even when you have decided on your sledge, it will not do to immediately jump into it. Any long drive, such as this to the Botanical Gardens, implies a preliminary struggle and competitive contest between the extortionate demands of the driver and the firm refusals of the would-be "drivee." There is no fixed scale of charges for driving in St. Petersburg sledges any more than in other Russian towns. The bargaining is conducted in this peripatetic fashion. You ask how much your drive will cost you; a ridiculous sum is named. You feign horror or anger to the extent your command of the language will allow you, and walk on. The driver follows you slowly, keeping by your side on the edge of the road, talking all the time; the argument proceeds as you both move on. Every four or five yards you walk the driver comes down fifty or twenty-five kopecks in his charge. The thought flashes on you that very likely children in Russian schools may be tortured with arithmetical sums constructed on the basis of this custom. When he thinks he has exhausted your patience the driver unfastens with a grand gesture the sledge-rug covering the back seat and says, "*Poschaluyite, Sudar*" ("Jump in, Sir,") and off you drive. The horse is urged on by a perpetual oration from its driver. This is the fashion in other places also. But in St. Petersburg the isvostchiks have a whole vocabulary of objurgatory phrases with which to reprove their steed for stumbling, sluggishness, shying, and other equine shortcomings. It is as well that many strangers do not understand much of the Russian used by their charioteers on these occasions. Their command of vivid abusive language may appal you, but you cannot help admiring their fluency and misapplied inventiveness. The extraordinary epithets sometimes applied to the horse will not bear translation for ears polite. The only excuse is that your peasant driver does not mean any harm; he would be astonished if you remonstrated with him. "He does not mean any harm by it; it is only in order that the *barin's* (lord's or gentleman's) carriage may fly more quickly." It must be said, too, that if this language in which a transgressing horse is censured is horrible, it is quaintly horrible. And if the St.

Petersburg *isvostchik* can untie a cursing tongue for the horses more easily than their provincial brethren, they only follow the general rule that it is the capital which invents and supplies slang for the rest of a country.

Meantime, we have crossed the Neva, and are scudding along towards the Aptekarski Ostroff, or Apothecaries' Island, where the gardens are situated. This Apothecaries' Island may be so named for the reason that there are no apothecaries there, just in the same way as in Russia, more than elsewhere, you often see "*Hôtel des Anglais*" written up over wretched inns where the most impecunious son of Albion would scruple to stop. At the same time, the apothecaries of St. Petersburg are such a goodly crowd that they could easily fill a considerably large island or space of ground with themselves, their shops and bottles. St. Petersburg is notoriously unhealthy. I believe its death-rate is the highest of any of the great capitals of Europe. Diphtheria carries off an astonishing number of victims yearly. In the lower classes scrofula is so prevalent as to appear almost universal. Scurvy and gastric diseases are also very common. On the other hand, consumption is not at all frequent, despite the cold of the country, and it is said that a St. Petersburg winter is the best cure for obstinate cases of rheumatism. But if patients are many, doctors are comparatively few. This fact is useful as showing that there is not that necessary numerical ratio of existence between these two classes of the human species which cynics are sometimes wont to discover. The St. Petersburg doctors (judging by what people tell you) bear, on the whole, a high reputation. They have not yet, at any rate, treated to death a great diplomatist, as has been charged against Italian leeches in the case of Count Cavour.

This information is imparted here to while away readers' time as they are driven on towards the gardens. Not far behind us we can see the many domes, towers, and chimneys of the city, and yet here we are passing along a road which might be in the country, or at any rate in very distant suburbs. The houses are chiefly small wooden cottages standing back from the road, with little gardens in front of them. This description, so far, would serve for many other places besides Russia. But the houses here are strikingly distinguished from similar cottages in Holland, France, or elsewhere by the liberal amount of neat and pretty woodwork and trellis-work on them,

generally painted a gay green or orange colour. The picket fences have their palings cleverly carved into most fantastic shapes. You shudder to think of the day (which will surely come) when these picturesque little villas will have discarded their graceful and unique wood carvings for some of the odiously elaborate designs in railings perpetrated by the modern ironworker. There are no people walking about, and we have only met one or two vehicles in our long drive. This solitude is a most constant and extraordinary feature of the suburbs of St. Petersburg. Whatever the inhabitants of the houses on this island may occupy themselves with, they certainly do not indulge in out-door exercise.

Turning a corner and skirting a high wall, we soon arrive at the front gateway of the gardens. Walking up a short path bordered by splendid trees you reach an office. Here you send in your card, write your name in a book, and if you want to make a particular impression you show your passport, pointing to the British lion and unicorn stamped on it. A young man, half clerk half gardener, is assigned to us as guide. He speaks only Russian, and his pronunciation of the Latin names of the plants is regulated on Slavonic rather than classical principles. The nerves of an Oxford classical don would not survive a tour of the hot-houses with him. I may explain, for those who do not know the language, that the ordinary way to pronounce a Russian word is this—say it over in English, and put the accent on the most inconvenient and unlikely syllable, and you have it as it ought to be said. We start off on our tour of inspection of the glass-houses. They are poor and mean in themselves, but their splendid contents make up for their architectural deficiencies. This is the best botanical garden in the north of Europe. It is said to be unusually complete in specimens, and perfect in arrangement. A botanist could spend all his days at St. Petersburg very pleasantly here. To say nothing of scientific entertainment, he would be comfortably warmed for nothing. Even the general visitor is astonished by the immense extent of these hot-houses. They are built in the shape of a hollow quadrangle, one side of which is nearly 400 yards long. In such a climate the heating of this large area is very expensive, and is managed in the face of all sorts of difficulties, which are pathetically enumerated to us by our guide. The frost breaks the pipes and cracks the panes of glass, and a draught of killing air blows in, destroying

in a few minutes a priceless variety of orchids, for which plants the garden is celebrated. Melting snow pours down an unsuspected crack in the roof in a deadly stream, and drowns a tulip of some wonderful new shade bought at Haarlem for £50 or £60. Still, in spite of these wanton acts of the weather, the wonderful variety of plants collected here in this icy part of the world is most astonishing. You wander on through compartment after compartment, each an epitome of the flora of some distant part of the world. Here you stand in the luxuriant vegetation of Java, among plants with great thick velvety leaves and gay creepers and flowers with scents of overpowering sweetness. In the next room is the Ceylon collection. There you see beautiful Palmyra and Areca palms, bamboos, the cocoanut tree, and brilliant clusters of the large waxy saucer-like blossoms of the red Hybiscus. You might imagine you were in a corner of the gardens which perhaps are the most beautiful in the world, those at Kandy in Ceylon. In a short poem, Heine gives an example of the impassability of distance and of separated loneliness by picturing a solitary fir tree in Northern snows and a palm tree on burning equatorial sands. But here they are brought together—the fir trees are growing outside a few feet from us in the snow; and the palms in the hot-house beside us here can see them—through the window.

The excellence of this botanical establishment, though astonishing, is easily accounted for. The Russian Government spares no expense whatever in fitting out all these scientific institutions in the fullest and most satisfactory manner. A despotism has some advantages after all. Here there is no trouble to be gone through in placing sums of money on the estimates, and getting them paid by the jealous guardians of the public purse. There is no inconvenient Parliament to criticise what it considers an extravagant sum paid for the maintenance of the St. Petersburg Botanical Gardens, or School of Mines, or Great Library. When a desirable collection of objects is to be purchased, or a scientific expedition is to be fitted out, a simple line or two from the Czar gives the authorities *carte blanche* as to incurring expense. Ships, provisions, scientific instruments, salaries, anything necessary, are all provided by the Government in the most handsome manner. The Russian armies are generally accompanied by some scientific *savants*. Whatever may be said of

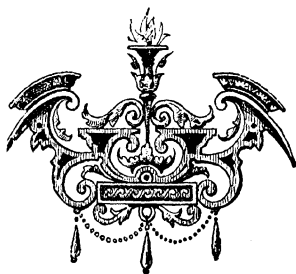


Russian campaigns in Asia or elsewhere from a military or international point of view, there is no doubt that they are the means of providing a vast amount of new information and important discoveries for the world of science. People will not appreciate how much has been done in this way till they see, as I have, the piles of "reports" on these subjects (mostly written in French) which are entombed in Russian public libraries.

These considerations are impressed on you as you walk through these garden houses. It must have taken an infinity of expense, time, and careful trouble to collect these hundreds of thousands of plants. There are enough infant trees here to plant the whole area of St. Petersburg, and convert the site of the city into a forest, thick, even in this country of thick forests. But after all, the chief feeling you experience here is one that can only be understood fully by those who have passed at least some weeks in Russia. They know what a luxury it is to rest the eyes, dazzled and fatigued with the colourless view of white snow and hard ice, on fresh grasses, soft mosses, and flowers, and, above all, green trees.

At last we come to a part of the glass building where it would not be surprising to find well-known vegetable friends missing—the Australasian division. But even here, though the professed botanist might find some gaps, the ordinary visitor is astonished at the transplanted representation of the antipodes exhibited to him. The collection of Tasmanian and New Zealand ferns is splendid, and most tastefully arranged. It might be a slice out of one of the fern-tree gullies in those countries. At last we venture to put the most crucial question of all. We have found out by this time that our guide, despite his eccentric usage of the Latin tongue, is, like most Russians in similar places, a very intelligent young fellow. "*Yest lee u vass eucalypti*" ("Have you a eucalyptus here?") The man's eyes actually sparkle with pleasure as he answers, "Yes, sir, certainly." It is evidently considered one of the valuable specimens of the place. We instinctively look up to see how near the rather low roof our gum tree has been allowed to grow. But no, in a tub, in soil carefully mixed with some white sand, stands a poor little tree about five feet high, representing the giant of Australian forests. It seems to put out its branches in a tentative way, as if ready to draw them in the moment they touched the cold air. Still, we can honestly congratulate our cicerone on having the tree at all.

The eucalyptus is certainly advancing. Not content with combating and conquering the desolate unhealthiness round the railway stations in the Roman campagna, and having learned treatises on its properties exhibited in many booksellers' windows on the Continent, it has actually pushed its way up north here to Europe's "frozen capital." Now here is a fine subject for Australian poets. The ungainly gum might be represented as Australia's arboreous ambassador to Europe, or as disdainfully declining to grow on Russian soil, or by a hundred other conceits which it is beyond the province of the mere prose writer to suggest. Still, the fact baldly stated here will lend itself to a more fanciful and ideal treatment at the hands of our bards than any I should presume to attempt. Much has been heard about the "Russian Advance." Here is an interesting example of Australian advance.



## A COSTLY TEMPLE.

MONEY will not always buy beauty either in things human or architectural. Still, everyone will admit that a building which has cost three million pounds sterling is worth while not only looking at but even reading about. This is the sum which has been spent on the Church of St. Isaac (not, of course, the well-known patriarch, but the more obscure, if equally worthy, saint of Dalmatia), the cathedral of St. Petersburg. St. Isaac's is constantly before you here. St. Petersburg is so level that wherever you get a chance of an open view you may see the great gold dome of the cathedral up in the air above everything else, dwarfing by its height the prodigious buildings which surround it. This great cupola, crowning the city, has a different beauty of its own every hour of the day. I know no place where you can have so constantly such a fine sight before you. In the misty winter morning it seems to float in the air as if unsupported by any substantial masonry. At midday it flashes out with a white blinding light, and at sunset it takes an almost lurid red coppery shade, as if melting before the glow of some great furnace. In moonlight its gold is weakened into the appearance of silver. But a most extraordinary phenomenon is that in the darkest night, when you can hardly grope your way through badly-lit or unlit St. Petersburg, you can always distinguish a faint light on the dome, watching like a beacon over the sleeping city—or rather the city which ought to be so employed, although I am sorry to say much of it is not, for “early closing” of Russian upper-class eyes or supper-rooms does not seem to exist here.

The first time you walk by the Morskaya (marine) Street to the Cathedral you find it stands on a magnificent place which runs right out to the Neva Quay on the north side. This St. Isaac's Place is about 600 yards long and 200 yards broad, and the part of it between the church and the river is planted in gardens. The great buildings on either side of this open space seem to have receded respectfully, and always in the military straight line of St. Petersburg, so as to leave plenty of room for the church to display itself in. On one side is the long line of

the walls of the Admiralty and the War Office, and on the other is the immense building of the Senate. The first story of this is as high as many ordinary two or three storied buildings elsewhere, and the entrances which pierce the walls have the grandeur of some vast triumphal arch. This Senate-house is in its size, if it only knew it, a standing satire in brick and daubed stucco on Russia. What is the use of these acres of rooms when the country cannot and dare not elect a Parliament to fill them, and when even the Emperor's Council would not require more space for conducting its barren deliberations than is afforded by a good-sized boudoir?

Walking along under the shadow of these buildings, you can get a full and unimpeded view of the great cathedral, standing by itself in the centre of the Place. I know that critical architects have used words to St. Isaac's as hard as its own everlasting granite. But whatever its technical faults it would always look grand in spite of itself. According to a great authority, more materials have been used in it than in any building since the days of the Egyptians. And such materials! Gold, silver, bronze, granite, marble, jasper, porphyry, and all sorts of precious stones are mixed with confused profusion. The church is in the form of a Greek cross, and built in the Greek style. It has four great porticoes, one on each side. The great dome rises from the centre, where the arms of the cross intersect, and there are four smaller domed bell towers at the four corners. The gold covering these domes is valued at £50,000. The porticoes are acknowledged to be the finest erections in their style seen in the world since the days of the Romans. They have altogether forty-eight of the most wonderful columns in existence. These are of the most flawless rose-coloured Finland granite. Each column is round and beautifully polished and is sixty-five feet high and seven feet in diameter. Marvellous to see, every one of these columns consists of one single piece of granite. They are the greatest monoliths in existence, except the Alexander Column looking down on the windows of the Winter Palace in this city, and Pompey's Pillar standing in the filth of Alexandria. Far up, running round the drum of the great dome, is another colonnade, of the same red material. Each of the columns here is also in one block, and is forty-two feet high. The triangular spaces above the pillars in the porticoes

are filled with colossal bas-reliefs. At the corners of the church stand bronze figures of angels holding candelabra and wreaths. These figures are about twenty feet high. But all over the walls and roof, filling every possible corner, perched wherever they can find a place, in the balustrades round the domes, on brackets beside the windows, as if they had flown up there, are winged figures in bronze. The art of the modern metal-founder has supplied St. Isaac's with a whole bronze hierarchy of Heaven. There are almost as many of these foundry-made angels patiently keeping their places through Russian snows and sleet upon the roof of this cathedral as there are ever worshippers wearily listening to an infrequent sermon under it. The longer you stay taking in the general effect of St. Isaac's the more you see that it is, as has been said, one of the greatest structures of modern times, and the most important building achievement of this century. The enormous weight of the whole mass of the building rests on a foundation of wooden piles slowly and laboriously sunk in the marshy soil. This part of the work alone is said to have cost £200,000.

As you walk forward to enter the building by the south door, you are astonished to find that what appear to be three steps leading up to the porch are really three enormous platforms of superimposed blocks of granite. Their height would prove an insurmountable obstacle to the entrance of the most eager and nimble votary hurrying to pay his devotions in the church. You notice that the top of the high street lamp-post is on the same level as the uppermost of these platforms. Fortunately, however, a concession has been made to ordinary human limbs in the shape of a flight of nine steps cut in the glistening ruddy granite, which make smaller demands on athletic energy. Mounting these you stand in the porch under an arched roof among the huge pillars, which have a bronze casing at their pediment, and bronze Corinthian capitals, one leaf of which is about the dimensions of an ordinary-sized man. It is only now you fully appreciate the grandeur of this entrance. These pillars are almost the largest ever fashioned by the hand of man. They appear so stately and immovable that it requires an effort of imagination to remember that they have ever been brought here, and have not always stood here as majestically as at present. They rather resemble towers cut out of the living rock before a cave temple like Ellora or

Elephanta. When the afternoon sun shines on this entrance the effect is a very fine one. The columns shine and gleam where the rays strike them like blades of steel, and the great sparkling masses of the smooth shafts cast huge dark shadows across the sunlit wall and the great iron door behind them. The impressiveness of this vestibule of the Russian Cathedral is rarely if ever equalled. The entrance to St. Peter's at Rome does not approach it in general effect.

The interior at first strikes one as being very dark, and this is certainly its great and undeniable fault. It takes some minutes before the eyes can appreciate the unparalleled richness of material and splendour of work before them. The feet slide over a polished floor of the finest marbles, in slabs of different colours—of lilac, of grey, of a lighter grey veined with rose-coloured streaks, and in some places of a rich black. The objects on the walls and the light of the lamps burning before the pictures are reflected and shimmer on this floor as in a sheet of still clear water. The space between the pillars on the walls is encrusted with the most precious marbles, honey-coloured oriental alabaster, light green or rich red verde or rosso-antico, rare purple slates, and other delicate colours worked in patterns on a ground of an extraordinarily white marble only found in Russia. Gilding is applied on the capitals of the pillars, round the medallion pictures on the walls, and on the rich cornices. The walls, roofs, and vaults of the arches are covered with pictures of great extent, and many of them of fine design, though the effect of their colouring is often lost in the gloom. These pictures are by artists of all countries, but chiefly by Frenchmen and Russians. They cover every available bit of wall space. There does not seem a square inch in the whole church which has not been decorated with some rich and costly covering of painting, gold, or marble.

But bewildering as all this gorgeous display is, there is a still more wonderful sight in front of you—the great Iconostasis or screen running right across the church, and separating the sanctuaries from the nave. This is perhaps the most brilliant object in the whole of Russia. It is a wall glowing with the lustre of polished marbles and gold-covered pictures. It is more than twenty feet high, and has been happily termed “a temple within a temple.” What first strike you in it are its famous pillars of precious stone. There are four of the finest

malachite, each thirty feet high, and two of the richest dark blue lapis lazuli, nearly twenty feet high, one on each side of the royal or central doors. These last are worth £6000 each. When you remember that these two materials are used for adorning jewellery, inkstands, fine clocks, and other ornaments, and that even in these small quantities malachite or lapis lazuli is very costly, you realise the value of the pillared masses of it before you. Nothing more beautiful can be seen than the play of light and shade on the flutings of the rich green and inconceivably dark blue of these columns. The royal doors between them are about twenty feet high and fifteen feet broad. They are of bronze and silver, richly worked and jewelled. Walking up towards the screen you begin to notice its details, of which it can only be said that they match the whole of the place in splendour. The shrine is reached by three steps of red porphyry flecked with rose spots. Elsewhere these steps would be a show in themselves. Above them, across the nave, runs a balustrade of white marble, with lozenges of different coloured marbles, the centre of which is often formed by a jewel—cornelian, onyx, or topaz. Many of the pictures in the screen itself are worked in fine mosaic, and they have the usual gold covering and halo of gems round the head. But to attempt to give a full idea of this extraordinary piece of work is hopeless. Its dimensions are those of the side of a house. It is finished like a piece of jewellery. Its marbles would be sought for the finest and most minute inlaid work, and the gems embedded in it would literally fill a sack.

We find a priest dressed in full canonicals—afternoon service is just going to begin—who takes us within the sanctuary. No woman is ever allowed to enter this part of a Russian Church. Here the chief altar is enclosed in a miniature circular temple of great beauty. It has eight pillars of malachite nearly ten feet high; these are worth about £25,000. Its whole materials of marbles and ivory and gold are said to have cost well on to £100,000.

It is in the dusk, during the afternoon service, that St. Isaac's is seen to greatest advantage. As the daylight fades the lamps accentuate gradually more and more the colours of the gems near them. Their faintest flicker is repeated in shadow in the smooth marble floor or walls. The nave of the church begins to look cold and dreary, and you unconsciously press forward among the crowd of worshippers towards the

glitter and splendour of the screen. The silver doors and the darker marbles show out in more brilliant contrast. The more distant corners of the cathedral become lost in the gloom, and give an air of mystery and a vague feeling of extension to the place. Looking up to the great dome, a weak, hardly-perceptible glimmer of light is entering by the lantern windows, and the wings of the large figure of the Holy Dove seem to flutter in the faint rays. The contours of the pictures on the walls become indistinct in the shade, or a chance light falling on one of the figures of a painted group brings it into a strange prominence against the dim confusion of the others. Every moment the gigantic painted figures of the angels in the corners of the dome become more ghostly and colourless in appearance, and look as if gifted with temporary motion and life. It is easy to understand at such a time how the credulous and impressionable Russian peasant can be imposed upon by pretended miraculous appearances. In the doubtful darkness of the church, to eyes blinded with the golden glitter in front of them these figures do almost seem as if unfolding their wings for flight, and stretching out their arms trying to reach each other across the space under the dome, now misty with the fumes of rising incense.

Meanwhile the beautiful singing has suddenly ceased, and for a moment or two there is complete silence in the church; even the silvery rattle caused by the swinging of the censers has stopped. Then the royal doors are thrown open. The space between them at the back of the church is seen to be filled by a magnificent stained-glass window. The northern twilight outside is still strong enough to show its rich colours of purple, scarlet, and gold. It represents a colossal image of the Saviour in the attitude of benediction. A procession of the priests carrying the Host come out of the sanctuary through the doors. Their vestments are stiff with embroidered pearls and gold, and worthy the ministers of this splendid temple. All the congregation bow their heads for a few minutes, and then vigorously and rapidly cross themselves. A few of the more devout take a short "circular tour" round the church to pray to some of their favourite pictures, and then the cathedral is soon empty and deserted. Going out from this glow and warmth of colour, the surface of the great place, deep in snow, shining grey in the twilight, looks cold and cheerless; it is solitary except for a few half-frozen sledge drivers in shabby



yellow sledges. As we take a last look at the monumental grey granite walls of St. Isaac's they look so dull and plain that it is hard to believe that they form the casket for the gorgeous display of the earth's treasures we have just seen inside. Some critics may think it an architectural failure, but the traveller is to be pitied who cannot both appreciate and feel astonishment at this wonderful building, which, though it has been less than half a century in process of erection, has been put together to last for all time. It more fully deserves the title of "Cyclopean" than any structure in modern Europe. The effect, which may be produced by a prodigal outlay of wealth, patient and ingenious labour, and priceless and exquisite richness of materials can nowhere be so well studied as in this cathedral of St. Petersburg.



## SUNDAY IN ST. PETERSBURG.

"To let, an eligible residence: Gospel preached at three places within half a mile." This sentence, quoted by our great English humourist, I first heard from a gentleman in St. Petersburg. It certainly might be very appropriately put up as a true if not seductive placard over any tenement seeking a hirer in the Russian capital. Though there are not as many churches in St. Petersburg as in Moscow, still the former city cannot complain that it is neglected in this line. It contains enough ecclesiastical establishments to minister to the spiritual wants of an area of the same extent thickly populated with African savages absorbing churches and mission-houses with an insatiable heathendom. In St. Petersburg the churches often possess one of the choicest bits of frontage to an important street. The open space round the Kazan Cathedral, for instance, in the Neffsky, must be about two acres I should say. Covered with shops here, where the rents are enormously high, this land would produce many thousands of pounds yearly. But so far from looking at the matter in this secular and utilitarian way the Russian Government does not even charge the churches taxes on much of their property.

Those who read the heading of this article may still their fears that it is going to take the form of an oblique sermon. If they will trustingly come with me this morning to the English Church, I promise to spare them the reproduction of a single sentence of the excellent homily delivered there by the chaplain, and at the same time give them some "useful and interesting information." The English Church stands on the quay of the same name fronting the Neva, among the most handsome bank and public companies' buildings in St. Petersburg. It is the most fortunate of all the English churches on the Continent as it is one of the largest and finest. It has a revenue stated at about £2000 a year, accruing from funds formerly given by the British Government to a trading company in Russia. We enter first a large room on the ground-floor, where we deposit

our coat and shoe coverings. What a show of furry magnificence are most of these cloaks belonging to the English worshippers here! Our compatriots can evidently contrive to make a residence in the Russian capital profitable enough to afford to give £100 or £150 for a good fur. You can realise the truth of what Russian residents say, that a dress which will pass muster at Court ceremonies in other European capitals may be far below the average standard of richness demanded at St. Petersburg. I venture with all timidity to recommend ambitious lady readers who may intend to visit Russia to bear this fact in mind, and having gone so far, perhaps I may be pardoned for presuming to state for their further guidance that when I was in St. Petersburg black dresses were most in vogue. I am sorry that these remarks have been made *à propos* of entering a church. For excuse I can only plead the universality of a close connexion between the two subjects.

The church is a large room on the first floor, its length being parallel with the street. The walls are handsomely painted and gilded, and the style is classical, with semi-detached pillars running round the walls. We have done quite wisely in leaving coats and wraps down stairs. "As cold as a church" is a saying which would be a libel on this comfortable building. The large entrance-door at the top of the stairs remains open the whole period of service, and yet there is no draught of cold air. What a contrast to the painful refrigerating process sometimes undergone as you sit in the maliciously angular pew of an English church, or lean against an icy pillar in seatless Milan, or St. Paul's Outside the Walls at Rome. But as a Frenchman has said with paradoxical truth, St. Petersburg is the only city where you can keep yourself warm in winter. Once you come there to winter you had better stay in it, for you are sure to catch cold if you leave it. The congregation assembled around us numbers about 600. There are about 4000 English in St. Petersburg, and so the statistics as to their church-going habits should compare favourably with those of other places. There are two or three clergymen taking part in the service, and announcements are made of committee meetings, and church or mission meetings for almost every day in the ensuing week. It is as easy as pleasing to see that this church dispenses much practical philanthropy, and is active in doing charitable good works. The Emperor and Government of Russia are prayed for. Whether this excellent practice is pursued at

times when there is "considerable friction between the Cabinets of St. James' and St. Petersburg" I do not know. If it is, many of the congregation must feel in a similar state of mind to undergraduates at the Universities, who are bidden to pray for a blessing on their Proctors.

Other reasons aside, it is important for every one to come and see the English church service at St. Petersburg. It is there you find the most representative gathering of the English colony, and can gain an idea of its importance. The congregation has a look of substance and prosperity. Many of the English gentlemen around you are proprietors or managers of very large businesses—rope works, tallow works, tanneries, metal foundries, ship-building yards, and others. English capital is invested largely in all these industries. It forms a wage fund for hundreds, if not thousands, of Russian work-people employed in these places. If any collision ever arises between England and Russia, almost the first effect of it would be to throw all these people out of employment, and this again would re-act most seriously on the commercial and economic welfare of the city. To say nothing of this, any English savings or capital which could be withdrawn from the country would at once leave it. If votes on the government of their country were given to these labourers, they would soon understand the evil effects of such a collision. Their pockets would soon educate their minds on the subject, and the hard-working artisan class of St. Petersburg might do as much to preserve a self-interested peaceful feeling between St. Petersburg and London as the most astute dispatches of ignorantly daring or needlessly submissive diplomatists in either place. Everyone must fall into this train of thought if he muses here, looking round the well-filled benches, when he ought to be attentively following the sermon.

After the service is over a small squadron of sledges drive off with fresh-looking well-dressed English occupants to the Vassili Ostroff. This is the English quarter of St. Petersburg. You can always tell the English houses there by the clean look of their windows. The windows of most Russian houses, when they are sealed down for the winter, seem to be left to perform their own ablutions with rain and sleet as best they can, greatly detracting from their transparency. We do not follow the majority of the congregation to the Island, but walk in the opposite direction down the Neffsky to the Hotel

d'Europe, for no more cogent motive than to have a Russian lunch, which is quite equal to an English Sunday dinner. During our lunch to-day we came in for a small occurrence characteristically Russian. The breaking up of a party of five from one of the tables in the corner occasions a general interest in the two rooms connected by a large opening. Waiters range themselves obsequiously, and the manager appears and bows respectfully as one of the five passes; most of the Russians in the room also make a courteous recognition of the same man. He is of middle height, strongly built, an extraordinarily square face, short nose, and long and broad upper lip, smallish eyes very deeply set under overhanging brows, and a shock of long black hair, he walks as if half blind (which he is), and his grey eyes have a somewhat dim expressionless look. This individual, who is the subject of so much attention, is neither a prince nor a general, though he is one of the best known men in Russia. It is Anton Rubinstein, the great composer and marvellous performer. He has not long returned from a tour in Europe, bringing with him £20,000 earned by ten fingers manipulating ivory keys. This little scene at a luncheon-room shows how proud his countrymen are of him. Would Sir Arthur Sullivan or Sir Frederick Leighton be similarly recognised and greeted in London fashionable restaurants? To make up for the harsh treatment they have too often received from their Government, the Russian people seem tenderly proud of their celebrated men, literary or artistic. The writer was at Moscow during the period when the great novelist, Turgenieff, was, near Paris, lying ill of the painful illness which ultimately killed him. Every day, as the mail came in, the bulletin of his state formed a subject of a general and anxious conversation with every one you met, just as did the weather, the opera, or the markets.

Going out for a stroll in the streets, we can see that to-day (Sunday) is kept more strictly than it generally is, which is not saying much. That is because we are in one of the last weeks of the great Lenten fast. As a rule on St. Petersburg Sundays, the shops in the chief thoroughfares (though shut during the morning) open about one o'clock. In winter they do their best business on this afternoon, when the weather is too uninviting for the crowds of promenaders to go for more distant excursions to the northern islands beyond the Neva. The theatres (in Lent only the smaller ones are open) are generally

filled on Sunday evening. It is the opportunity for the tradesman or shopkeeper, who has taught himself and his family French, to go to the immense and fashionable Marie Theatre, in the Michael Square. There he can hear French plays acted by a company better than any in the world, except, perhaps, that of the Théâtre Français in Paris. This afternoon, however, the prospects of gazing on shop-shutters instead of on the tempting articles they conceal and guard seems to have kept the usual Sunday afternoon crowd from walking the streets, and the footpaths are more deserted than usual at such a time. We even pass a man who (taking advantage, I suppose, of the absence of many of the *gardavoi* or policemen) is distributing hand-bills, which I believe is against whatever ordinances stand for Corporation Bye-laws in Russia. These bills, however, are not inflammatory proclamations nor Nihilistic *brochures*. They are innocent from a political point of view, if from no other. They announce that a "Grand Divertissement Bohémien" is going to take place this evening in some place of entertainment near the lower end of the Neffsky Prospect. It might be fancied that this G. D. B. would not be altogether an appropriate or elevating pastime for a Sunday evening. This fancy would not be fanciful. Nevertheless persons of very high, and I was going to say respectable, positions will be found "assisting" at this entertainment to-night. But a Sunday is not the time to tell of the improper doings of St. Petersburg, so we will turn in to St. Isaac's for a moment or two as we are just passing it.

Strange to say, the great church which took the Russians fifty years to build exists at this moment as a temporary private chapel for one worshipper—a young man. The reckless genuflexive energy he shows in his devotions at once attracts us to look at him. He is going round the west end of the church, where the sunlight is streaming in, whitening the floor, and he bows himself down to the ground with three inclinations before every picture without exception. Fortunately his youthful piety is seconded by a juvenile suppleness of frame, but we cannot help thinking that the choice of some one patron saint would save him an infinity of trouble and future backache. This young man is a good type of the ordinary young Russian peasant—a type you see so constantly in Russia that it is only when you leave the country it occurs to you it is necessary to describe it. He is about sixteen or seventeen years old, about

five feet four inches high. He has evidently no special Sunday dress, and is clad in the usual sheepskin tied with a rough thong at the waist, and has great boots of yellow coarse leather, reaching to the knees, very loose and badly fitting. He is a good-looking lad enough, with blue eyes, healthy red cheeks, springing moustache and whiskers of light flaxen colour, and long brown hair. Such a young fellow as this has the makings of a good man in him, and it is hard to think what his future will be. As he grows older he will either simply become dirtier in body and lazier in habits, and manhood will most likely mean to him simply a fully developed taste and power for drinking, or else he will make the sad discovery that, if he keeps sober, his hard work will after paying his taxes only save him from starvation.

Leaving the church we regain the Neffsky, and following it down and homewards our attention is arrested on the bridge over the Moika Canal by one of the prettiest sights you can see in Russia. Three or four score of young people of both sexes are skating on a closed-in portion of the frozen canal about twenty feet below the level of the bridge and roads running parallel to the canal. Stopping for one minute to look at them, we soon find forty have gone by while we stand in the sunlight, leaning on the iron railings, still amused and admiring. As might be expected, Russia is the land to see skating. The difference between the average skating you see in other countries, such as Holland or Germany, and that in Russia, is as the difference in action between a steam-roller and a race-horse. This is no exaggeration, and really the skaters before us here seem able to go through the same evolutions on the ice that a bat does in the air. But even here man is not born a skating animal; there are one or two beginners, who are very likely strangers. They use to assist their sprawling efforts a large wooden chair placed on skates, about five feet high, with two long curved arms jutting out in front. A good band which is in attendance strikes up Strauss' unsurpassable "Stories from the Prater" waltz, and the skaters form themselves in lines nine or ten persons deep, and intertwine in a series of most graceful figures, always swaying to the swinging rhythm of the music, melting the groups off into single couples, and then rejoining in lines of yet new figures again. All this unrehearsed movement is executed without ever losing time or falling into any confusion. Soon, however, the shadows of the

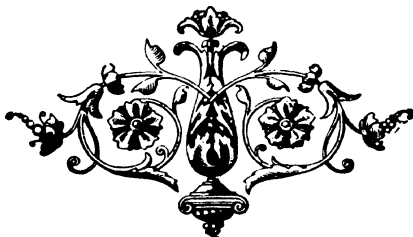
skaters become fantastically lengthened on their white floor, and show it is getting time to be moving on and off.

A few paces below the canal we take the opportunity of turning into the chief Roman Catholic Church. It is a fine large yellow building, standing back about forty feet from the Neffsky, as if anxious to flaunt its possession of this nice block of unused land. The sermon has just begun, and is in German. To avoid being accused of being too general in description, I may say that it was on the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and was, without exception, one of the most eloquent discourses we ever heard on the Continent. The Roman Church in Russia, as elsewhere, avoids the fallacy that a minister must necessarily be a preacher, and recognises that a narcotic sermon of stupifying dreariness on a Sunday may do much to weaken the attractive power of religion on hearers who fully admit and admire the blameless life and undeniable goodness displayed by the preacher on the six week days. It is only telling the unprejudiced truth to say that you are always sure of hearing eloquence in the Roman Catholic churches in Russia. This you will be bound to admire, whatever doctrinal sect under the sun you belong to.

But I allude to this sermon particularly because of what follows, which surprised us extremely. It shows the unexpected liberty of speech sometimes met with in tongue-tied Russia. Here we were in the capital of Russia, where the Emperor himself is the recognised head of the Church, a sacred official in it, and its supreme ruler. And yet as the preacher warmed up, he attacked several of the tenets of the Greek Church with a bitterness thoroughly theological, and warned his flock of the danger of believing what "those superstitious ones believed on the other side of the street," waving his hand in the direction of the Kazan Cathedral, a few hundred yards off. He even went on to say very hard things—no harder, perhaps, than they deserved—of the Greek clergy, and finished up with this extraordinary sentence, which I quote exactly:—"Unless they (*i.e.*, the priests of the Russian Church) leave the road on which they are wandering, they will soon reach a place in it where the lion of Retribution will rush upon them from out the cave of violated laws." It will be admitted this language is somewhat "elevated" in style. Stranger still, nine or ten soldiers in undoubted Russian uniform were in the church listening to this and like rhetorical and revolutionary



utterances. I found out on asking that they were men from the Baltic provinces, and the Government was tolerant enough to let them attend their own church when they wished it, though they, of course, had to fall in with their company when they marched to the Greek service *en masse*. This German congregation here had a poor and wretched look, and you heard what is surprisingly rare in Russian assemblages, a good deal of that hard hacking cough which one associates with ill-housing and ill-feeding. We walked out to the strains of the organ, which sounded quite strange and unusual, both as being in Russia and owing to the wheeziness of its pipes, perhaps influenced by northern air. I asked one of the soldiers who this firebrand of a preacher was? and was answered in Russian more indifferent than my own, "Nai snayoo, Soodar; malee dobree molodyetz" (I don't know, sir, but he's a fine brave young fellow). I have no doubt he has been gently, but firmly, sent back across the border months ere the present time.



## A TREASURE-HOUSE.

A RESIDENCE in St. Petersburg has one disadvantage for the sightseeing traveller. It does not leave him a large reserve fund of admiration to bestow on the sights of other cities. You constantly see something round you which can be described as being the best, or one of the best in the world, of its kind. The Hermitage galleries, for instance, in the excellent variety of their contents, form undoubtedly the finest collection of objects in the world. The palaces are the largest in the world, the luxury of living is the most desirable in the world—comfortable without being enervating—and the servants who are its ministers are the best to be found anywhere where modern progress still allows the convenient system that a servant shall serve. Accordingly, we take it almost as a matter of course to learn that the Gorny Korpus (or College of Mines) in the Capital, contains the richest and most marvellous display of minerals in the world. The words “mines” and “minerals” will not, I hope, frighten away people from looking at a show which it is worth while coming all the way to Russia to see. I am not going to speak of drives, leads, shafts, adit-levels, and other mysteries of mines which possess no material beauty, and to the ordinary mind suggest only two ideas—daring speculations, and dreadful accidents; nor are the minerals we go to look at the earthly colourless-looking lumps, which suggest thoughts of smelting, extracting ore, and other processes, the attempt to understand which, as they are carried on here, produces an immense amount of boredom on idle travellers. We will not here allude to anything less valuable and beautiful than gems and precious stones, which are so splendid that the person who sees them and can resist coveting them displays not a plethora of moral self-restraint but a minimum of appreciative taste.

It is a March morning, and St. Petersburg appears at its very worst—cold, dripping, and dirty. A slight thaw with a moist wind has set in, and, strange to say, you feel the cold far more than you do in the most vigorous windless Russian frosts. But heat and cold are merely relative terms, and a thaw in St.

Petersburg is quite Arctic enough for English tastes, just as a winter there is said to have proved altogether too mild for some still more northern peoples, such as the Lapps. The story goes (it has been quoted by other writers) that some years ago some Lapps came down to St. Petersburg from Lapland for one of the great Exhibitions, bringing with them their reindeer, which used to run in their strange sledges on the frozen Neva, to the great entertainment of the curious Russians. It was in the middle of December, and the thermometer had descended almost as low as it could below zero. Nevertheless, the poor reindeer found the winter weather so insufferably warm that they broke down under it, and had to be taken back to their own more congenial, if not genial, climate.

This morning the uninviting weather has induced a corresponding procrastinating reluctance to face it, and accordingly we find every one breakfasting very late—about ten o'clock. I never knew a place where people are so little in a hurry for their morning meal as Russia; even commercial men seem able without any inconvenience to steal an extra hour from business for bed. I suppose they make up in the later hours by concentrating their acute faculties in obeying the Russian rule of commerce, *bess obmana, tor-gilyu nyet* (without cheating commerce is impossible). This is a day to spend indoors, and not to walk about over streets, whose white covering of snow has been soiled by the thaw and a mixture of mud into a light-brown coffee colour. The Hermitage, that palatial refuge for the traveller in bad weather, is closed on Fridays, so we start for the School of Mines in a sledge, which runs more heavily than usual in the present sticky clogging state of the snow. Our way lies to the Vassili Ostrof, at the farthest down corner of which the School stands fronting the Neva. We cross the magnificent new Alexander Bridge, which is one of the engineering triumphs of St. Petersburg. It is 1340 feet long, and so broad that nine or ten sledges and a tramway on rails can run abreast on it. It stands on a series of magnificent granite piers which divide it into a succession of boldly spanned arches, if you look up at it as you walk over the surface of the river. For strength it is unrivalled in Europe, but it will need it all when the ice breaks up about the end of this month, and the Neva comes rushing furiously down with tossing blocks of ice on its muddy waters and flings them against the granite masonry, as if irritated with

this latest obstacle to its broad stream. The Alexander Bridge is certainly one of the most delightful sights in the city, it is the great pathway between St. Petersburg over, and on this side of the river, and is always full of brisk movement and varied life. This morning is no exception. There are the ubiquitous moujiks, in their long bulging *touloupe*, and long comb-defying hair falling down to their shoulders. Their figures look like those of women viewed from the back. There, too, is the smart dvornik (house porter) carrying a large account-book, moving along in grey cloth clothes, with a low cap, and his distinguishing garment of a leather apron like that of a bootmaker. An unusually handsome sledge, with a great deal of gold on the harness and trappings, dashes past, accompanied by a military outrider. Its burthen is one of the Grand Dukes. This sledge makes a quick turn to get out of the way of a huge one like a dry-land raft, loaded with bales of merchandise, on the top of which sit its charioteers; it is still early, but they have evidently already paid a morning call at their kabakk (dram-shop), and they are droning out a well-known Russian song, "Pa ulitze mostevoy" (all along the road) with an expression of vinous melancholy. We pass a little boy belonging to one of the Russian Military Lyceums. He wears a brown serge cape and a grey cap with a green rim, which has a number on it. To-day is one of the numerous holidays which fall to the lot of lucky Russian school-boys; he is accompanied by an old gentleman who is pointing out things to him, and at this moment is evidently the victim of an improving paternal expatiation.

By this time we have crossed the bridge, and pass several large shops at the corner, which advertise that they sell tea, coffee, chocolate, and candles. I enumerate these homely commodities, because it seems in Russian towns as if they were the only things worth dealing in, and as if there were more people engaged in selling them than there can possibly be consumers to buy them. As to candles, they seem to be so eagerly exported as to leave a dearth and darkness in the town itself, for nothing is so remarkable in Russian rooms—except those of course of the best establishments,—as their poor and mean lighting. As to chocolate, the quantity consumed is enormous. You soon find that if you are out driving, and want to change a ten rouble note to pay your driver, the simplest way is to pull up at a chocolate shop (there will

always be one near) and buy a few copecks' worth. An *isvostchik* will, of course, never have any change, nor, for that matter, ever confess to having earned a single penny all day.

We soon arrive at the Mineral School, and send in our card. Mr. Burnand has somewhere represented an individual who was acknowledging an exorbitant amount of respectful servility not intended for him, as for a moment fancying himself the Prince of Wales. In the same way, after he has visited several Russian public institutions, the most modestly unassuming traveller begins to fancy that he must be "some one in particular." You see almost anything you wish to see if you ask for it politely, you are treated also with the courtesy and interest to be expected by a guest, rather than with the perfunctory toleration extended to a curious traveller in other places. Here a secretary comes out and receives us with French politeness in French, and calls a student to act as guide over the rooms.

Entering the large room downstairs you see walls hung with geological maps, and all around models of machines, mines, and other objects uninteresting to all except engineers. But just at the door is something to look at. There is a block of malachite valued at £20,000. It is about four feet high, and is a ton and a half in weight. A piece is cut flat on one of its sides, so as to show a beautiful polished surface of rich dark green. It has an exquisitely soft appearance, as if some fine moss had been suddenly turned into stone. You soon find that this room contains, crowded in among its more practical exhibits, a wealth of the earth's gems, a description of which would read almost like a page out of the "Arabian Nights" or a Hindoo romance. You could literally take away a cart-load of amethysts, sardonyx, emerald, agate, jasper, beryl, topaz, lapis lazuli, and I know not what else. This is saying nothing of rubies, sapphires, diamonds, and opals by the score, a few of which would make a small fortune. All this will seem a mere catalogue unless readers for a moment imagine the effects produced by fine specimens of any of these stones they know, and then remember that I have left many unmentioned. Several, however, deserve a more full description. The finer stones are placed on small stands, often uncovered by glass, and you can take many of them into your hands and hold them up to the light. On one of these stands is a small heap of tourmalines from Siberia. They are of the most exquisite

red and crimson colour, like that of almond blossom ; they are transparently clear, and give out a wonderful flesh-coloured lustre. A child might think they were blocks of pink sugar-candy. Some of these tourmalines are three inches to six inches square. Those who possess even in a mild degree what Mr. Ruskin calls the colour-sense could spend a long time looking at them. One lump will contain the most wonderful mixture of tints, from pink to almost white. The effect produced is something like that noticed the very first moment when some red wine is poured into a glass of iced water. A large beryl, also from Siberia, is one of the wonders of this collection ; it is valued at £5000. It is an obelisk-shaped crystal of the brightest green. It gives off a shining glassy lustre. It is about eleven inches long, and is embedded in a rougher mass, which seems to show off the contrast of its emerald brilliancy. The emeralds here are in large blocks, too large to be set in any ornament of jewellery. They would do for paper weights. Then there are sticks of the loveliest aquamarine of a pale colour, of uniform delicacy throughout all their length ; there are blocks of lapis lazuli, a rich deep blue, faintly spotted with streaks of red ; there are topazes several inches in diameter, of a warm brown or yellow amber hue, polished like prisms of the finest crystal ; there are large amethysts, making a purple mass of colour seen nowhere else in nature except in the shades on Italian hills ; in rivalry of tint beside them are sapphires, the largest of which is the size of a small egg. But it will only weary and dazzle the mental eyes of readers to enumerate the wooden drawers here full of rubies like drops of blood, and diamonds like drops of water, the streaked rich black and white of onyx and agate, the cases full of milky-white and iron-red sardonyx and brown jasper, which quiver in the light and shoot out shades of all the colours in the rainbow, and the enormous opals, with grey melting into orange, violet, red, and green. When you are bewildered with looking at stones, you can turn to gold, several fine nuggets of which are shown here. One is worth £4000. There is also the largest platinum nugget ever found in the world. Most of these exhibits are from the mines in the Oural mountains, which have made the Demidoff family the Rothschilds of Russia. The arrangement of these minerals here is, I was told, not perfect scientifically ; but as a mere show of dazzling splendour the collection is unrivalled in the world. No money

has been spared in getting it together. Orders are given by the Government to all owners of private mines to keep any rare specimens for purchase by the Government, while the Government, from its own mines in Siberia, can always command an inexhaustible supply of some of the most beautiful materials that pick and shovel have ever unearthed for the jeweller or lapidary. The money value of this collection is as yet untold, and has been variously estimated. It is said that one million English money would not be over the mark. I must say that this does not seem extravagant, when you multiply the immense number of gems here by the perfectly well ascertained sum which is the market value of many of them. It must be remembered, too, that some specimens here, which from their appearance a thief would think last of abstracting, are scientifically priceless, for there are two or three of them absolutely unique, which the mineralogist must journey to Russia to study. The strangest thing about all this exhibition is the way in which it is arranged. You walk round and come on one of these dazzling little heaps of precious gems I have spoken of, next to, or under, some wonderfully complicated machine, all cog-wheels, screws, and pulleys, which could, no doubt, do wonderful things if it cared to set itself in motion.

In the garden attached to the school you see a work which is a very characteristic example of Russian munificent expenditure. This is the model of a mine. I expected to find some Lilliputian counterpart of the real earth-robbing establishment. But instead of that you find a place which you enter by going down a flight of steps to a great wooden door, mysterious looking as the entrance to vaults. The guide opens it, and you find yourself inside a place which art and care have made like a real mine instead of a contracted model. The guide shuts the door behind us, lights tapers, and we wander along through passages twelve or fifteen feet high. Everything is complete, even down to the ores appearing in the sides of the drive. They actually have the precious stones and metals stuck into them, just as they would be in reality, but imitations of course of both are employed here. Still the glass stones and crystalline masses sparkle in the glow of our tapers, and the appearance is most brilliant. In addition to this, the damp has trickled through on the walls of the passages, and little icicles and watery spots glisten like so many needles and bright steel beads. Whenever the light strikes them, the walls wake

up into all this glitter, and it is so beautiful that you forget to try and understand the various processes of grubbing in the ground which are being explained to you the while in all too fluent Russian. You go down to different levels in this sham mine, where the openings are less liberal in space, and altogether you walk hundreds of yards in the labyrinth before the wooden door again greets you with its stout beams of soaked wood. As you leave this institution you have to admit that nowhere in Russia have you seen money expended so as to produce such a striking combination of the practical and the magnificent. The 250 students who are educated here as mining engineers, and most of whom are employed in military operations, have every chance of becoming formidably proficient in their profession. And as to the mineral glories within the walls of the place, you feel gratified to think that nowhere else on the earth could you have seen at once such a dazzling representation of the materials in it.





## ABOVE ST. PETERSBURG.

POETS are in the habit of sighing for wings without divulging very definitely whether they merely wish by their use to save railway and cab fares, or to put them to some less practical purpose. But the temporary loan of a pair of these appendages, properly fixed on, would be very acceptable to the matter-of-fact traveller, in order to save him the trouble of a climb of some hundreds of feet up ice-cold slippery iron ladders and a trudge through snow on the roof some inches deep, when he mounts to the outside of St. Isaac's dome to get a view of St. Petersburg. It is quite a necessity to perform this ascent sooner or later. St. Petersburg is, I am sure, the most level city in existence. It is the dearest dullest flat, the plainest plain imaginable. Day after day you look along the same vista of broad street, with gigantic buildings on each side, and nothing beyond them. You never by any chance get the opportunity of seeing over the top of anything. You can look up to the roof of rows of great houses as you walk along, but if you want to know what is on their other side you must walk round and see. There are no gaps or unoccupied allotments to let you know whether a house with a most imposing frontage runs back 10 or 100 feet. Therefore, to look down on the city is far more of a revelation than it is in other places. The most extraordinary revelation, however, which you gain at such a time is that of the marvellous energy and dauntless mechanical perseverance which have ever placed the city where it stands. The very existence of St. Petersburg is a signal example of the triumph of the hand of man—we might almost say of one man—Peter the Great—over the most refractory and unaccommodating forces of nature. It is only from the top of St. Isaac's that one can properly appreciate what has been well called the daring position of St. Petersburg. Neither Venice, nor that "vulgar Venice," Amsterdam, can boast themselves as such successful achievements in snatching territory from the Sea and making it Land fit for the habitation of man. They seem only considerable heaps of earth compared to this great city of forty-five square miles, now lying below us. As

'you look down on the roofs stretching around, it is hard to believe that St. Petersburg rests on a foundation of land at all. It looks rather as if it were shipped on some gigantic extended raft, which had become frozen up in sea between the Neva and the Gulf of Finland. Indeed, St. Petersburg may be said to rest partly on a great raft. Miles of thick forests have been thinned or bared to supply the great wooden piles over which seemingly solid streets run and weighty buildings rise. It was a long time and took much weary work before a foundation could be got at all in the marsh which formed the cradle of the capital of Russia. By a law of Peter the Great, every ship which came into the port of St. Petersburg had to bring with it a quantity of stones, and deliver them up to the authorities, to help to fill the morass. In the same way, every cart or merchant's caravan arriving in the city had to contribute its quota of stones towards solidifying the ground where shop and market were to rest. Even now, after all this unprecedented labour, the city is not perfectly safe from being once more swept over by the sea. When the tremendous stream of the Neva is opposed by a wind from the Gulf blowing salt waves against its fresh course, the collision of river and sea makes the water rise so that it is sometimes within a foot of the level of the top of the granite quays, instead of twenty-five feet below as at this moment. Then it simply depends on whether the wind soon changes or not whether the whole of the city is to be flooded. St. Petersburg has suffered severely from inundations—the last was in 1873. Now, however, every year it is becoming better protected from them. But even now there is generally at least some one day in the year when the capital is in a panic, owing to impending risk from flooding; guns are fired, and various danger signals warn the people to be ready for a temporary amphibious existence if they wish to preserve one at all.

Looking down on the city as we are doing, the most thoughtless traveller must have that thought forced on him, which I must recur to again, as it always insists on presenting itself to you in St. Petersburg. You think with admiration of the power of rulers and the capabilities of people who, in less than 200 years have made up for former lost time, so as to present before your eyes to-day this city, as grand as any other in Europe which has, perhaps, been four times as long in coming to its present state and even now cannot surpass the Russian

capital. Here are to-day the roofs of Palaces, Churches, Custom-house, Exchanges, Museums, Arsenals, Railway stations and yet, less than two centuries ago, this place was a treacherous sea-soaked morass. It is only a period which might be spanned by two men's lives—say a long-lived father and a long-lived son—since here beneath us on a marshy swamp the bitterns and herons were scared by hearing the unwonted sound of the carpenter's hammer ringing over the grounds they had haunted undisturbed from time immemorial. Men may be (and very likely are) living in Russia yet whose great-grandfathers had a fisher's hut here in the oozy soil, and who doubtless grumbled at the threatened danger to their livelihood from the presence of the projected town of St. Petersburg. Then this unnamed site was so poor and unimportant that not even freebooting vessels from the North Sea would look near it. Now it is one of the first of the world's names, and a few words incautiously or unscrupulously uttered by a single man under the roof of that great building with a bend in the centre (the *Etat Majeur*), on to which we could almost throw a stone from here, would land nations in war and Europe in alarm. I insist on this subject, because those who would form a true idea of Russia's capabilities must grasp the idea of the phenomenal growth of Russia's capital, which is in its way unique. The great American cities are in no way a parallel instance. They had a fair start. They were projected by freemen and built by freemen. But the Czar Peter had, as Dean Stanley says, not figuratively but literally, by kicks, blows, and cuffs, to goad his unwilling country forward in building his city which was to equalise Russia with other countries of Europe. After him Catherine carried on his work in a slightly more legitimate way, less forcibly, but as effectively.

But this view of St. Petersburg from St. Isaac's can be looked at, not only as a page of concrete history, but as a present picture. And in the picturesque, it must be confessed, it is at first somewhat disappointing. The whole city conscientiously preserves the level of its foundations right up to its roofs, and the only objects which shoot out above this flat monotony are the golden spires of the Admiralty and Fortress, the elegant top of the German Church, and a few more domes to the eastward. But the best way to let readers form a vivid idea of the chief characteristic of a winter view of St. Petersburg is this: let them imagine that the very words they are

• at this moment reading, and all the printer's ink before their eyes, are suddenly absorbed into the paper, leaving a blank, white sheet before them. So is the view of St. Petersburg. Glaring whiteness is the distinguishing feature of this panorama. Nathaniel Hawthorn has said that every city wears its own peculiar colour as you take a general view of it. St. Petersburg is then distinguished by having no colour. Readers may think they could have told this for themselves, seeing we have mentioned that the city is covered with snow; but Moscow was even more deeply covered with snow than the city beneath us is now, yet it was so full of colour that one did not know how to describe it. It is easy to imagine how the eyes of the inhabitants here will feast on the green of the trees, which can clothe themselves in soft foliage in the space of a few days in the spring time. You can understand how the St. Petersburgians come in thousands to the Summer Gardens, and wait there for hours in the long mild evenings, rejoicing in the vanishing of white from before their eyes. Even at present, however, the view is beautiful enough, and is one of those that you know will never be forgotten from the first moment you look on it.

I wish I could give readers some idea of the exquisite Russian climate on a fine afternoon such as this. An absolutely cloudless sky and bright Northern sunlight, pale but pure. It is, of course, cold, but what a splendid cold! dry, fresh, bracing, and strength-giving. The very wind is not unpleasant or sharp. It can spread out its wings over the whole broad surface of Russia. And it seems somehow to widen itself out across the air space and blow all around you; it does not concentrate itself and make at you in the form of draughts or gusts, as in more mountainous countries. You cast your eyes past the city towards the horizon, but you cannot calculate how far you are seeing. The white shining plain goes endlessly on till it meets the sky—no mound, no hill, no undulation anywhere. It is the same on every side—a boundless reach of snow everywhere, the flat white earth in its furthest extremity forming a foundation rim of waveless line for a low-domed sky. At the horizon the snow seems to send up a dusty cloud into the sky; above this is a band of a milky white and blue, and as you mount towards the zenith the blue becomes gradually clearer and less pearly till right above you it is an unstained cobalt hue, and seems (as I have said) in these Northern latitudes

surprisingly near the earth. If you look out to sea to the west the mist is thicker, and dims the colours of the flags flying on the few ships in the winter port. Then, as you bring your attention back again to the great city immediately below you, how silent it is! How different from London or Vienna, where by the time the various street noises have reached your ear on the top of St. Paul's or St. Stephens' they are blended into an indiscriminate multitudinous hum. The sea here is not many miles distant, and yet as you walk round the outside of the dome to the side next it you listen vainly for the distant sound of roaring water or breaking waves brought to you by the breeze. The sea, like the river beneath us (over whose surface the black sledges are noiselessly passing), is frozen into silence. The only sound we hear is a constant brazen vibration like the tone of a very distant band of trumpets. This is produced by the wind as it rushes through the outspread brass wings of the statues of angels and the bronze balustraded railings which surround the dome. The longer you stay here the more are you struck by the impressiveness of this view. This is difficult to account for, as it is produced by four of the commonest elements in nature—boundless white snow below, blue sky above, and bright sunlight and fresh wind filling the absolutely unimpeded space between them. And yet, like so many other things Russian, this sight has a peculiar and undefinable charm of its own.

But the real daylight here only lasts just now nine hours out of the twenty-four, so we come down as the quays and high houses are casting square compact shadows on the Neva and dyeing so much of its surface from a blinding glistening white into a light, dull, steely blue shade. The old sacristan in his long liveried coat with silver buttons, who has constituted himself into a garrulous city directory during our half-hour's aerial survey, is now limiting his conversation to an emphatic repetition of two phrases, "Snaig! snaig" ("Snow, snow"), and we certainly are walking through it on the roof up to our ankles, and "Ya stareek, Sudar" ("I'm an old man, now, sir"). We are used to this sort of thing by this time, however. It is a fact that in Russia more than anywhere else every *custode* or caretaker you have to employ takes unlimited pains to impress upon you his belief that the weather is very cold. The reason is obvious to the meanest comprehension. The traveller may thereby be more easily led to reflect that he has

it in his power to bestow the means for procuring liquid calorification. The old man is abundantly content with half a rouble, and takes it nicely. Russian servants have acquired an art which might be well emulated by those of other nations. They take a necessary "tip" as if it really were a gift, and not a matter of right, though in many cases it is so here as much as elsewhere. I have never found a single case in Russia of a man looking sulky or grumbling at a gratuity, and we never gave more than a fair sum. Those who have travelled much, especially in the East, will join in the wish, "*O si sic omnes.*"

We walk along the Cavalry Boulevards to the Neffsky, and stop, as everyone does, to look in at the magnificent photograph shop at the corner. Several soldiers do the same, rubbing an ear vigorously the while. This rubbing of the ear is the most Russian of Russian gestures. If anyone who knew the country was spirited off to Russia in a dream, it would be one of the first evidences—in winter, of course—he would look out for on waking to make sure where he was. If people think this habit is so trivial as not to deserve mention, let them go to Russia. Then, unless they wear a cap with ear-flaps (and many people do not), they will find half their time and half their hands taken up with this aural friction. It is an important habit for the stranger in Russia to get into when the thermometer is say thirty degrees below zero. The moment a man feels he has not a smarting ear to rub, he had better be careful, or his feeling will soon be made by frostbite into a reality. Then, as is well known, you "take a hair of the dog that bit you" by rubbing snow on the affected part. I have often seen a man stoop down and take a little snow off the footpath in his fingers and rub it vigorously on the top of his ear, or between the ear and the head. These little things tell you how cold Russia can be far more than the most accurate readings of the temperature. A man bites his lips to see if they are still there, or to wake them up, so as to go through the contortions necessary in articulating a sentence in Russian; he will find his moustache hard and stiff with icicles, his own frozen breath. In the street you look at the time by your watch; in a moment the glass is covered with a film of moisture. In the same way, a person who wears eye-glasses or spectacles entering a warm room from the street will see nothing for a moment or two; they become instantaneously covered with a mist as if breathed upon. It is uncomfortable

to wear any but a very loose finger-ring in the open air, and ladies take out their earrings when going for a long drive, so as to avoid being pinched by the contracting metal.

At the same time, I never found it so cold in Russia as to make it impossible to go out; neither, in fact, is it ever so. The stories that it is sometimes so cold that birds cannot fly in the air, and others of the same sort, are simply stories. Those who tell them must have travelled to Russia, not in railway trains, but between the red boards of a guide-book, and must have moved about there, not on their own goloshed feet, but on the wings of an expansive imagination.

To-day we were going to dine on the other side of the Neva, and crossed in a vehicle entirely novel and strange in style. It is a green wooden chair, built plainly but strongly; it is placed on two longitudinal skates, pieces of steel about five feet long. In front are two deal boards on which you rest your feet. The chair has arms, and you lean back comfortably in it. Your beast of burden is a human animal—a man in moujik's dress. He skates, leaning on the back of the chair, and pushes it before him with extended arms. Your simple conveyance runs so fast that you soon think its *vis inertiae* will prove too much for its driver, and that you will be shot forward on your own account; but the further you go the faster you get, till the man has to act almost as much as a drag as a propeller. The motion is pleasanter even than the sledging, and just as fast for this short distance. These men brush out a road over the ice, and its course is shown by little heaps of snow. In them is stuck a dead or dying shrub, and on this hangs a lamp at night. The price of this drive is cheap enough, your man-steed only requiring ten copecks (equal to a penny in Russia) for his 300 or 400 yards swift course.

On the way home we trust ourselves to a horse-drawn rather than a man-drawn sledge, and tumble along in it over one of the temporary bridges. The sentry at the end of it peremptorily orders us to put out our cigarettes, for no smoking is allowed on these bridges. This is a precaution against fire, and at present the most inflammable materials near us are snow and ice. Still, of course, we comply with the rule, which has just as sensible ground for existence as many similar Russian civic ordinances. It is a fine night, and a sickle-shaped moon and the stars shed a light of an extremely pale bluish shade, like that of the flame of some spirit thrown into a fire. The

snow on the Neva is as white as in the day time except that it does not sparkle ; the city, as usual at this time, looks deserted and quiet. I must confess (while I also warn intending visitors not to expect too much) to being disappointed with the nights at St. Petersburg. I had heard of the descriptions of them by French writers, who tell you the sky there is pinkish, that it is greenish, that it is a pale yellow, and, in fact, everything except the usual sort of nocturnal sky. The firmament here may occasionally present itself in some such *outré* garb, but comparing other things I did see with descriptions of them furnished by writers like Gautier, for instance, I am driven to the conclusion that many things the above writers have described as realities were ideal. Russia has sometimes been inaccurately treated at the hands of her describers, in order that they may be picturesque at all hazards. Why will people not put down exactly what they see ? It is easy for us to do so now, however. The night is no more beautiful than any you can see in the North of Scotland say. There is not a glimmer of the aurora in the sky. The Neffsky Prospect is deserted, though it is only eleven o'clock, and for half a mile's drive down it the only sound to be heard is the rapid scraping of our own sledge bearing us homeward over the snow.





## AN AFTERNOON DRIVE.

THE longest lane must have an end and a turning. Even the Neffsky Prospect in its proud stately course has to obey this law as rigidly as humbler pathways. The great street runs about three miles before it can bring itself to make its one turning at the Moscow Railway Station. At its end is the Great Alexander Neffsky Monastery. This is one of the most celebrated of these establishments in Russia, and is remarkable in more ways than one, as readers who peruse this chapter may find to their surprise. We start off to see this place from Dominic's on a Saturday afternoon about two o'clock. It is one of those days which, if weather has any influence in shaping character at all, has much to answer for in fostering that depressing sadness which is supposed to be such a distinctive quality of the Russian people. The sun is sulking behind a sky filled with clouds and mists as it only can be in Russia, and people look up wondering whether the afternoon is to be made wretched by rain or by snow. We detail our destination to our *isvostchik*, as we sit in the sledge, having, as usual, previously pointed to him the direction in which he is to drive us. I say "detail," because to tell him in Russian the name of this monastery would take up exactly a line of this page. It is one of the petty difficulties of daily life in Russia that the lower classes, drivers, servants, and shop-keepers, require you to give them orders with a tiresomely minute accuracy of language. Their stupidity often makes them unconsciously the most pedantic of purists in speaking their own tongue. For them you must always put the accent exactly on the right syllable of a word, or they will not even try to understand you, and shake their heads blankly, saying "Nyet, nyet" (don't understand). They will never try to extricate you out of a grammatical slough into which their language so easily plunges you. A Russian word, too, has often at least six syllables, so the chances of laying the stress on the wrong place are pretty considerable. Many travellers must have found, for instance, that if you tell your driver to take you to your *gostinnitza* (hotel) instead of *gostinnitza*,\* he

will find great difficulty in knowing what you mean. If at a restaurant a customer, wisely wishing to partake of the incomparable Russian fish soup, calls it *ukha* instead of *ukha*, he has unwittingly bespoken a horrible dish which will entail personal mutilation. He has asked to have one of his own ears. But the consequences of wrongly accenting a word are not always so serious as this, and gradually ear and tongue become reconciled to the new and uncouth forms of sound. As long as he is not so asthmatic as to have to stop gasping for breath in the middle, say, of the genitive superlative degree of some monster adjective, the student of Russian can, at the price of boldly attacking "foot-and-a-half" long words, soon purchase a retail stock-in-trade for Russian conversation.

During this digression our sledge has been swiftly sliding along till we are passing the great *Gostinnoi Dvor*, or Bazaar, with its strange fire watch-tower at the north end. This Bazaar does not require a special description after the one I have given of that at Moscow. Here it is on the street, two stories high, and I should say that its frontage to the Prospect is more than a quarter of a mile long, while it runs back about half a mile. You can buy anything in its covered arcades and net-work passages from a toothbrush or broom to a sewing-machine or a revolver, and from old clothes and snuff-boxes to a garden-hose, marble clocks, and children's toys. Past the Bazaar is a fine Place, in the centre of which stands a high square building painted a gaudy red. This is the famous Imperial Public Library, one of the finest collections of books in the world. It contains about one million volumes, testing the strength of its shelves and defying the industry of the complete cataloguer. Besides this, it has a splendid collection of ancient manuscripts, among which is the celebrated Tischendorff Codex Sinaiticus of the New Testament. Opposite the Library is the Alexander Theatre, which is useful as reminding Russian playgoers that Russian is their own native tongue. Here the national drama is chiefly represented, while the other great theatres are mostly given up to plays in French or German, or to Italian opera. Soon after this you come to the Moscow Railway Station, which very appropriately turns its back (in the shape of a high, blank, windowless brick wall) on the city.

Here the street takes a turn to the left in direction, and a turn to the bad in reputation. Behind its frontage here lie what may be called some of the "slums" of St. Petersburg.

What is termed "the state regulation of vice" exists in St. Petersburg, and some of the most vicious characters, who manage to elude the police and sanitary inspectors, hide here within a stone's-throw of the great broad thoroughfare. We turn aside and go at a walking pace through the unsavoury streets, not very narrow even here. In these "dangerous quarters" (which are not so dangerous as they once were, owing to the progress of building) lurk all sorts of human beasts. It is in some of these dirty, greasy dram-shops that many well-contrived murders have been committed. At the doors of them now are standing, or rather leaning, some rascally-looking moujiks, who grin at our *isvostchik* as we pass. Their expansive grim smile shows us that they form no exception to the ordinary Russian peasant in possessing a splendidly preserved set of teeth. In the high houses about us here live many of the people who earn a dishonest living as false witnesses, and swear to anything required with elastic and accommodating unscrupulosity. Some of these people enjoy in the Law Courts a regular "practice" in perjury, as we might call it. Around us here, too, can be found many of the wizards, witches, and fortune-tellers who flourish in such large numbers in St. Petersburg. The demand for their services is very great among superstitious Russian society, and among the customers who enter their filthy hovels may be found ladies and gentlemen holding high positions in society. Regaining the Prospect, we notice that there is still much vacant land behind it, and many unoccupied sites on it. Many of these, however, are being covered with fine new brick buildings, four or five stories high, and I saw several foundations being excavated, and about half-a-dozen buildings half finished, and waiting for better weather till their workmen could complete them. This low quarter of St. Petersburg does not look so wretched as it otherwise would owing to the charitable action of the snow, whose white covering gives it a fictitiously cleanly appearance. It has not the crowded miserable look of such a quarter as that round the Gestade Church in Vienna, or the grimy poverty of Seven Dials in London. We find, too, here as elsewhere, that the sturdy weight of new brick and mortar does more to drive back and out unsavoury citizens than the most constant pressure from an energetic police.

We soon pass over one of those somewhat useless structures in a Russian winter—a bridge over a small frozen stream—and

then we see the dome of one of the churches, and the branches of the trees in the great enclosure of the Neffsky Cloister. This monastery is a *Lavra*, or Metropolitan Cloister, and the only other monasteries in Russia which rival it in wealth or reputation are the great Troitza Cloister near Moscow and the extraordinary *Lavra* of the Cave at Kieff. The Neffsky Monastery covers many acres of ground, and within its high white fortress-like walls are several churches, schools, and colleges, a library, bishop's residence, monks' quarters, and other buildings. In the centre of the enclosure is a large garden-plot or lawn, and all these buildings, whitewashed and with long glazed windows and passages, stand facing it. Leaving the sledge, we first enter a church immediately on the left hand. It is flat-roofed, and has a gallery and much gilt and smeared paint scattered over it. It is just like any ordinary Russian church—a bewilderment of gold, silver, and richness. Being Saturday afternoon, it is being vigorously swept out by two or three hideous old women with the enormously large head you so often see in this type of humanity in Russia. Several well-built, stalwart-looking monks are hovering about the choir, engaged in no more holy occupation than dusting and cleaning up shrines and sacred vessels. We make our way to another church built in a bad Italian style, and find it also in possession of sweepers. I asked an old man vigorously using his broom how we could get into the library of the convent? Without any hesitation comes, in a good-natured tone, the hopeless answer, "Kto snayet, Sudar?" (Ah! who knows that, sir?), and further information we cannot get out of him. After wandering about a long time and rapping at every door, we have to give up (without a pang of very great regret) our quest for the library. I mention this small failure because it is really symptomatic of Russia. All travellers must have found that very often they could not get in to see some building or sight simply because there was not a living creature about to let them in. So few foreigners visit Russia as tourists that the people have not yet got into the way of making a "show" of everything. You do not find the beggar or little boy waiting to run to fetch a sacristan for you, or a group of pestering guides round a door, as you do in France or Italy. As a matter of fact, there is nothing very much to see at this Neffsky Cloister except its own great size. It is a large village in itself. After a while we turn into the church again, where some singing is now going on. It is extremely fine, and is

famous in Russia. We are again struck with the handsome appearance of the monks. In fine physique and good looks they are far above the average of their compeers. Before leaving we go to see the Cemetery. It forms a source of very large revenue to the monastery. Very large sums are paid by noble or wealthy families to get a grave in it, and the monuments made of Russian granites and marbles are often very beautiful, though they are so crowded together as to make it difficult to get a good view of any one. Some of the inscriptions are quaint and novel. I noted one as follows (among other texts and emblems):—"If any flowers grow on this grave, they are the kind words from the heart of our son which he never said." This cemetery is a dolorous enough sight this grey gloomy afternoon, but in spring or summer we are told that it is a pretty spot. Then the green trees in the extensive gardens form a pleasing relief of colour against the white encircling wall, the gilt dome glistens against the blue sky, and the walls of the church cast a grateful shade over many of the graves lying close under their shelter, there are bright patches of grass between the stones, and fresh flowers strewn on the marble monuments. This silent corner is far away from all bustle of the city, and the only sound you might hear—except perhaps the cries, softened by the distance, of the boatmen navigating a lighter up the New Water Canal—would be the long harmony of the singing within the church, and the splashing rush of the Neva flowing close outside the monastery walls.

But this monastery may be considered in other and less pleasing aspects. It is a fountain giving rise to a whole stream of social scandal which is, unfortunately, too true. I simply repeat what I was told in the city, and what is there considered so true that no one argues about it. It is merely an evidence of what everyone who has been there will admit is the dreadfully debased state of social morality in St. Petersburg. The monks of St. Alexander Neffsky's Cloister are the favourite spiritual advisers of fashionable feminine St. Petersburg. This is all very well; but you are also told that within these monastic walls the priest develops, or degenerates, into the admirer and even the lover, and many a flirtation and gallant scene takes place, prompted by a feeling more tender than that of fervent piety. I must explain that the monks here are a special class. They are most of them ex-military men of high station, who have belonged to some of the best regiments in the army, such

as the Emperor's Guard, and some of the crack cavalry regiments. In Russia religion is often not the motive impelling a man to take monastic orders. He may be made to do so. A gentleman who has, say, killed his opponent in an improperly provoked duel will be ordered by the Emperor to enter a monastery. In like manner a person guilty of manslaughter by negligence, and in many cases of divorce the guilty male partner, will be ordered to become a monk. So with an official who has committed peculation so clumsily that the Government must take note of it, but who can employ influential friends to save him from any severer punishment. The gentleman who runs through his fortune as only a Russian can, and finds himself penniless, and therefore avoided by his friends, can have recourse to a fashionable monastery. There he can have his share in profits, an occupation, comfortable enough quarters, and a certain social position. Some of these cases of monk-making I have heard of myself, and others I quote from a reliable authority. The Neffsky is the most fashionable of all monasteries as a refuge for men of these classes. As I have said, many of the monks we saw were splendid-looking men, broad-shouldered, tall, and straight. They would have been more at home in their glittering regimentals on a charger's back than in their thin black-silk gowns on the monk's bench. Great ladies in St. Petersburg choose these monks as their favourite confessors and spiritual comforters. The monks have not a bad time of it. They are many of them men in the prime of life. If not in the world—the *beau monde*—they are certainly of it. They may not visit their lady friends' salons, but their friends visit them. They do not live in a cell, but in a comfortably-furnished boudoir or study. After a fair penitent has finished her devotions in the church she is invited to come upstairs to a most *recherché* little afternoon tea (*tête-à-tête*, of course) with her father confessor. Different gentlemen among the monks come into favour—have a "run" as it were—just like fashionable doctors or photographers. You are told that the first motive for many a conjugal "disagreement" (as they term it in St. Petersburg) has been a too assiduous attendance on the ministrations of the monks at the Neffsky. A *penchant* for Father this or that has ripened into such a decided preference that an injured husband has had to interfere and lodge a plaint in divorce. In what I say here I am merely repeating, in milder language, what I have been told by Russians.

with that cynical frankness which they adopt in speaking about the morals of their countrymen and countrywomen. In its indifference of tone, as far as possible removed from virtuous shame or honest indignation, this very frankness is about the worst and most disheartening evidence for those who look for signs of a moral regeneration in Russian society.

We heard all this afterwards on telling Russian friends that we had been visiting the monastery. So we drive away from it about four o'clock without any special feelings of interest or horror, and skirt the Neva going towards the north back to the city. We see a number of men in the middle of the river engaged in cutting and sawing lumps of ice out of the frozen stream. These blocks are great cubes, four, five, or even six feet in size, and are loaded on huge cart-sledges. On the other side of the river, a quarter of a mile across, there are very few buildings—only a few wooden houses, shaped like small chapels, and standing among clumps of rather stunted trees. After driving a long time in a straight line we reach the Smolnoy Church and Monastery.

This is one of the most splendid groups of buildings in Russia. It far surpasses that of the monastery we have just left. You are first struck with admiration at the grand bronze railings which separate the establishment from the street. They are about eighteen feet high, and between the pillars, twenty feet apart, hang most gracefully cast wreaths of flowers and fruits in bronze. Round each railing between these larger pillars are twined creeping designs of flowers. The cost of this fence must have been enormous, and it is in itself an exhibition of metal work to be compared with the finest examples of that class of work which have ever been fashioned. It rivals the great wall-rings and door-knockers of old Florence. Behind this railing stands the church, in the middle of a square of magnificent buildings. These consist of the monastery, a residence for widows, and the institution for noble young ladies. It is when you look at the grand scale of these houses, with their massive rusticated basements, their rows of classical pillars and handsome large windows, that you appreciate on what a regal scale charities are organised and supported in St. Petersburg. Everyone has spoken with respect and admiration of Russian charities as they are seen in St. Petersburg. Hospitals, schools, and benevolent refuges for the poor or the sinning, are all on a colossal scale. The Government may be

justly denounced in many directions, but the thoughtful attention and liberal purse it gives to charity certainly should cover a multitude of its sins. Here the church has five domes. They are of the old Moscow Tartar type, and in St. Petersburg, among the more staid modern style of all your surroundings, you greet them as old friends reminding you of Moscow or Kieff. The centre dome is almost the same height as St. Paul's in London, and all five are of dark blue, richly spangled with stars scattered so thickly over the cerulean roof-plates that you are made to think the architect drew his inspiration from the Milky Way in the heavens. On entering this church you can hardly believe you are in Russia, so great a contrast is it to every other church you have seen in the Czar's land. The whole extent of the interior (it is 250 feet long and 150 feet broad) is covered with a white marble of the most dazzling brilliancy. It at first looks like some wonderfully smooth polished cement or plaster, till on closer inspection you find it has an extraordinary closeness and hardness of grain. This marble, covering every inch of this immense church, casing even the walls of the dome hundreds of feet above you, is whiter than any alabaster, and absolutely veinless and stainless. In the whole of Russia you get no more fascinating *coup d'œil* than this Smolnoy Church, and the vice of enthusiasm must be excused in speaking of it. You enter expecting to have your eyes struck with the golden glare and ruddy glow showing against the dark interior of most Russian churches, and you find instead a building whiter than the snows outside, and no taint on its pure surface of spotless smooth marble, shining with the quivering reflection of the mirrored lights of lamps and tapers on its polished walls. Nowhere in Europe do you see a sight to rival this in colour, or, I should rather say, in exquisite colourlessness. In this way it surpasses that most marvellous of hand-made structures, the Taj in India.

We see a strange affair in process in part of the church under the great dome near the iconostasis. A part of the floor is screened off, and this is entered by a narrow temporary passage. Here about twenty-five or thirty women are waiting in a *queue* for their turn to get up to a table where sits a priest dressed in a black gown, with a purple and black cap; he has brown hair, good brown eyes, and long beard. A monetary transaction is going on; each woman stays talking some time, and then we see her pay money, the priest sometimes giving



her back coppers in change for her paper roubles, and also giving her a receipt. Curiosity prompts us to stay looking for some time, and we soon find out that these women are simply paying any accounts due by them for ecclesiastical services rendered during the week: baptisms, confirmations, saying prayers, etc. This, being Saturday afternoon, is "pay day," and beginning from Mass to-morrow morning the woman will be allowed to run up another week's bill for spiritual attentions. All this money-changing is carried on right under the altar-screen, near the steps to the royal door and the sacred entrance into the sanctuary of the church. The priest sees we are observing him, and, rising, comes and closes in a movable screen as a broad hint that we had better direct our gaze on some other object than himself and his customers. We cannot feel ashamed at ourselves for having looked on at this proceeding, for we have evidently managed to raise a slight feeling of shame in the priest at being caught in the exercise of his mercantile functions in a holy place by people who are plainly strangers enough to let him see they are surprised at it. Coming out of this building, with its stainless walls, smooth and polished like a sheet of untainted cream-laid paper, the snow itself looks coarse in texture and less pure than usual in hue. There are some splendid birch trees in the grounds here. Now they are benumbed, and hard and motionless with frost and ice; but when the branches are softened enough to bud, and wave gracefully in a spring wind, they must add to the fine effect produced by this monastery as a whole. Meantime the weather has made up its mind to hold out no longer, and sharp cutting gusts bring down thick showers of snowflakes. As we drive home we see all the men thrusting their hands further up their furred sleeves, and hitching up their shoulders, to try and lessen the area of their bodies on which the icy blast can breathe. We get home, and find it far pleasanter to contemplate the darkening storm through the medium of one of the cold-resisting double-paned windows of St. Petersburg.

## THE WONDER OF ST. PETERSBURG.

"THE wonders of St. Petersburg" would not in reality be a too high-flown title under which to describe many of the things contained in the great white city. In so many ways it surpasses all other European capitals. It is as well that most travellers generally see it after those capitals. Taking merely the general effect, compared to St. Petersburg Paris seems cramped, London straggling, and stately Vienna only ambitious. And yet, strange to say, I never heard a Russian boast about his capital; he may perhaps admire it, but he does not seem to love it. Pushkin, Shadoffskaya, and others have written pretty Russian verses about it, but no native writer seems yet to be so at "home" in it as to treat it, making its very stones speak, as Dickens has London and Hugo Paris. There is a fine field at the same time for the sensational writer in St. Petersburg. Crime is often startling in its daring, and the immorality of the city would keep busy a syndicate of Zolas "collaborating" in dressing up and dissecting modern vice. You walk along Garden Street, and it seems quiet and uninteresting enough. But it has been tunnelled out underneath you into a terrific mine meant to blow up the Emperor. At a shop in this street were sold cheeses and butter. The police found out that the supposed cheese-dealer, who had the name, I think, of Bugdanovitch, was really a nobleman in disguise, and he was to work from this shop the electrical machines which were to start the mine on its reckless work of slaughter. Or some afternoon you are walking along the quays, keeping on the side next the river to get the sun as long as possible; your attention is attracted by a small new chapel on the other side. It is a memorial of the spot where the late Emperor was murdered, almost under the shadow of his greatest palace, filled with a retinue of servants and guards, numbering from five to seven thousand. It seems impossible to believe, as you stand here now, that the ground at your feet has been shattered by bombs and stained with a Czar's blood. Right opposite you, on the Vassili Ostroff, you could see, if you took the trouble to do so, the dwelling where a woman—Peroffskaya—planned and

directed the execution of the murder which has given this spot its sad reputation. It is this sinister sort of interest, and this chiefly, which prevents the streets of St. Petersburg from being entirely monotonous. That in spite of all its wonders the city itself is monotonous, few who have been there will deny; and yet the seeming paradox holds true, that though this is the character of the city, life in it is far from being monotonous. There is one wonder of the capital which itself alone should act as a time-killing antidote to and destroyer of even the most hopeless Russian *ennui*—I mean, of course, the unparalleled Hermitage Palace.

The Hermitage stands next to the Winter Palace, with which it is connected by a brick bridge built in the air. It is about 170 yards deep, with a frontage of about 125 yards. One side of it faces the Neva, and the other (where is the entrance) fronts the Millionaya Street. The origin of its name, which is the same in Russian as in English, raises a smile to the lips. It was first founded in the shape of a small pavilion by Catherine the Great. She used it as a secluded retreat from what all her historians term the cares of State. If "hermitage" (as usually it does) means the abode of a hermit, we must look on Catherine's designation of this place as a most successful piece of royal irony, as it might be disrespectful to call it a joke. If this really great Empress had any of the flesh-quelling aspirations of the hermit, then Cleopatra was a nun, and Queen Anne of England was "fast." But Catherine certainly founded an institution which (putting aside those who have to come on business) has done more to attract visitors to her capital than anything else in it. It is a magnet which has attracted much of the gold and silver in travellers' pockets to be circulated in St. Petersburg. Being a Russian institution, it goes without saying that money has never been an object in purchasing anything it contains, yet it has been a good investment for the city. Familiarity with the place only makes you more and more astounded daily at the way money has been spent, one might almost say squandered, were it not that the effect resulting is so magnificent.

The Hermitage Palace itself is very beautiful. It is architecturally by far the best building in St. Petersburg. By very many judges it is considered the grandest museum in the world. Its immense extent, its splendid classical pillars, the statues of great painters and sculptors niched on the

magnificent façade, its windows, with their exquisitely designed arches, make it a delight to the eyes of the most uneducated beholder. The perfect finish and pure design of the Greek ornaments on the friezes are a charming study in themselves. A Russian architect who would lovingly sketch them would learn more than he might by a visit to Greece itself. On one thing it is refreshing to be able to speak with certainty without fear of contradiction. The materials of which the interior of the Hermitage is built are not surpassed by those of any museum, if not of any palace in Europe. Here in grand halls, day after day in their silent existence, life-like faces look out from priceless painted canvasses on pillars, floors, and furniture which would grace the banqueting-room of a great monarch. Gems of the finest art are shown in rooms, chips from the supports or walls of which might be worked into gems themselves. This is only what might be said of the Hermitage if it were an empty building. But it is filled. As you stand underneath the great entrance you are about to see the richest collection of objects of art in the world. The Vatican has more statues, the Uffizi, Louvre, or other galleries may have more pictures; but for a combination of collections of various exhibits, the Hermitage is certainly unrivalled.

This entrance is so fine that it may almost be said to be solemn. You drive up the inclined road, and alight under a great porch. Its roof is supported by ten figures of caryatids, twenty-two feet high each. They are of unpolished fine granite, their giant arms are lifted and placed behind their heads, which seem to bow painfully under the weight they support. The sculptor has here been successful in giving these figures that mysterious sphinx-like look seen in the monuments of old Egypt, to which it at once takes your fancy. It is not my fault if the ridiculous at once supervenes. Still feeling yourself crushed down like a pigmy under the influence produced by contemplating this grand vestibule, you enter the door, and your musing is dispelled at once, for you give up your umbrella to the servant, have your goloshes pigeonholed, and buy a catalogue for fifty copecks. The servants at the Hermitage are more numerous than is the case usually in Russia. There must almost be one for every picture. Their livery is also specially gorgeous, red scarlet vests and blue coats stamped over very liberally with embroidered devices of crowns and the spread eagle. Many of them, to add to their look of reposeful

dignity, stalk about with what are really like broomstick-handles, but what I suppose should be called wands. They are, however, obsequiously polite, and bow low every time you speak to them. As in most Russian places, the word of order is evidently given out to the attendants here to make themselves obliging to strangers. I have put them to a great deal of trouble to find a certain specimen in the galleries for me, and have met with no grumbling or dilatoriness. The great hall which we enter has splendid pillars of granite and marble, and is a fine introduction to a grand staircase leading up to the picture galleries. The luxuriously low steps of this staircase are of the whitest marble finely polished. They are so beautiful that you feel it a shame to tread on them, and instinctively look down to see if your boots have scratched them, but the fine marble is too hard for that. At the top of the staircase is an arched gallery running round the four sides of the opening. Here the pillars are splendid shafts of granite, all in one piece, and in the niches between them are statues. Everything—pillars, balustrades, and the splendid triple flight of snowy marble steps beneath you—shines with its polish just as if it were wet with a sprinkling of water. This view would be worth climbing upstairs for if there were nothing to look at through the great open doors at either end of this stair-gallery. On each side of these doors are beautiful mauve-coloured candelabra. They are eight or nine feet high, exquisitely carved, and the tints of them vary from rich pure violet to a delicate purple grey. They are the finest pieces of jasper in existence, and nothing like them can be seen anywhere out of Russia. Passing between the two flanking the door on the left hand, we enter the room with Italian pictures.

Readers are begged not to shudder here. I can assure them they are not on the brink of an artistic disquisition. The pen and ink of the writer, even if aided by the constructive imagination of a tolerant reader, are poor substitutes for the brush and pigments of a Raphael and the sight of the work itself. I merely wish to give an idea of the wealth of this collection which will interest people whether fond of paintings or not. As long as they are not travelling many people belong to this latter division; for nothing is more striking to the walker of great galleries in Europe than observing what he may term a "tourist-begotten" temporary love of art. People who have never even recognised the merits of well-painted signboards

or omnibus sides in London trot patiently over miles of galleries with dazed eye-balls wandering over acres of pictures, distinguishing with the aid of a guide-book a Vandyck from a Peragino.

According to the latest catalogue procurable (dated 1869), the Hermitage contains 1643 pictures. An Englishman may feel flattered by hearing that among these are eight of English artists, among them one by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which the Empress Catherine gave him 1500 guineas for—a large price to pay for any contemporary picture 100 years ago. It is strange that Russia should be the only country on the Continent whose National Picture Gallery recognises the fact that there is an English school of painting—that we have painters as well as generals. The collection of Spanish pictures is the best out of Spain, though St. Petersburg and Madrid are the extremes of great European capitals. There are twenty Murillos and six Velasquez. The Flemish school is splendidly represented by sixty pictures of Rubens, forty-one of Rembrandt, forty of Teniers, and thirty-four of Van Dyck. I am sorry to use so many figures, but as the catalogue justly remarks, they will be with difficulty met with in any other museum, and it is the only way to show what may be seen in glow of colour and mastery of drawing within these walls in the austere cold north. I merely give samples of a very few pictures which arrest the eye by wonderful power or beauty.

On your left hand in the first room stands one of the most powerful pictures that ever covered canvas, "The Deliverance of Andromeda," by Tintoretto. This work has escaped that fate of self-obliteration which has impaired so many of the great Venetian's efforts, who, unfortunately, used some substance in his pigments which has made many of his colours turn black. The white naked body of the maiden is represented bound to a rock; she turns away in horror from the sea-monster advancing to capture her, and looks up to heaven with an expression of entreaty. All around her is storm, the seething dark sea and thick murky clouds. From these the splendid form of Perseus in shining armour and helmet dashes down on the monster. This picture as a mere *tour de force* is almost unequalled, and I never saw any visitors to the Hermitage able to pass it by. In the Spanish room are the Murillos, canvasses which seem to be steeped in the rich warmth of a Spanish sun. Here is the famous "Assumption," the

Virgin clad in white, her feet on the crescent moon, surrounded by a wreath of rosy cherubs floating up into a rich glow of heavenly light above her, and an abyss with a look of unutterable depth in darkness below her. Here, too, is a pretty and original conceit of the Spanish master. An infant Saviour, seated in a scarlet chair, and clad in purple and white, is examining his finger, which he has pricked with a crown of thorny twigs he has been weaving on his knee. I need not describe more of these pictures; many readers can fill up the walls for themselves. There is the usual goodly muster of saints in various states of discomfort (painted as usual as if the artist did not feel for them one bit), a group of Holy Families merely slightly idealised Spanish peasants, several "Flights into Egypt," the artist's conception of Egypt being supplied by his own *patio* or back garden, and a number of "Portraits of Spanish Gentlemen" clad in sombre black, and scowling down at you sulkily out of their frames as if you had had something to do in transporting them against their will so far from their home as St. Petersburg.

In all these rooms there are tables, vases, and candelabra, each of which might stand as a show by itself, and not appear set in too grand a casing. There are tables of malachite, with exquisite veining and patterns nature-drawn on their rich, smooth, green surface. These tables are about five feet high and the same square, and are set in gold. The vases of red porphyry are of rich chocolate red brown, speckled with dabs of rose-coloured spots. The tables of lapis lazuli are of an indescribably deep indigo blue, with blood-red spots here and there intensifying it. Besides these there are ornaments in rose and violet and grey jasper, in tough syenite and in glistening granite and in Carrara marble, like blocks of glittering loaf-sugar. A table in the room with Raphael's pictures, which we next enter, is the *ne plus ultra* of modern mosaic work. It is a present from the King of Italy. It is round, and about six feet in diameter. Its centre is a diamond, and emeralds and rubies are stuck in all over it. I have never seen it equalled, even in the great Italian factories. Its variously-tinted marbles convince you that the stones under the earth's soil can produce just as varied and gay colours down in the dark as can the petals of flowers which grow in sunlight above it.

In this room are the most famous of the eight Raphaels possessed by the Hermitage. Two of them are most in-

teresting to English eyes. One is the great "Casabianca Madonna," the most precious treasure in the whole collection. It might have been in England now if our authorities had been less sleepy. It belonged to a London banker, and was bought by the Hermitage in 1836 for £14,000. Now it would fetch twice that sum. The other picture I ask attention for on account of its interesting career. It is a small "St. George and the Dragon," only a foot square, but so exquisitely painted that the separate hairs on the head of the rescued maiden can be seen, as also those on the mane of the knight's grey horse. This little gem of a painting was sent to Henry VII. of England by the Duke of Urbino in return for having been made a Knight of the Garter. In allusion to the honour you can read on a garter painted on St. George's leg the word "Honi," the commencement of the well-known device, "honi soit," etc. The picture afterwards found a royal owner, in our King Charles I. When in 1649 Cromwell (with the same unappreciative consistency which prompted him to stable his horses among the exquisite tracery of the Chapter-house at York) ordered the objects of art of the King to be sold—without thinking of buying them for the nation—this painting only brought £150. When it was acquired by Russia it had to go into holy orders, as it were, and served as an image to be prayed to in one of the galleries of the Winter Palace. One cannot imagine a greater waste. From the nature of the case, worshippers before it would either have their eyes shut or their heads bowed, and any other painted surface would have done as well as this beautiful little masterpiece of the greatest painter that ever lived. After this long and adventurous life it now hangs in the little cabinet close to a window looking out on an empty courtyard of the Palace.

The Hermitage is open free every day (except Friday) without any formalities being necessary for admittance. On Sundays it is open from one to three. For all this it is almost deserted as a rule, and you can have the great rooms almost entirely to yourself. What a delight this is most travellers will admit, and you can enjoy it in many places of as yet "unhackneyed" Russia. In the Hermitage you are not distracted, as you pause before some fine picture on a classical subject, by hearing the classical mythology recast in a most surprising manner by puzzled on-lookers. You have not to be an unwilling listener to disputes among a party of tourists as to whether a



picture of an undraped lady represents Venus with her cupids or the Magdalen with angels. The silence is not marred by the hurried shuffling of feet belonging to people scanning guide-books more attentively than the pictures, their object always seeming to be one of identification; they do not care what the work is, but it is something to find out that a Baedeker does not lie when it says the painting will be found in a certain place. At the Hermitage galleries, too, our genial Trans-Atlantic cousins do not crowd as in less favoured places. This spares you a considerable amount of joking criticisms which you remember to have seen far more amusingly put in Mark Twain.

The collection of cameos and gems is said to be the most complete in existence. The gems and intaglios are placed on velvet-covered shelves, set up at an angle of about sixty degrees. Holes are made in these shelves, and into these the gems are fitted so that the light shines through them. The carving on some of the ancient Roman gems is so fine that it has required a microscope to find out some of its more finished details. How was this minute carving done? If readers can tell, they will elucidate a hitherto dark part in the history of art.

But the most wonderful wonder of the Hermitage galleries is the Kertch Collection of Antiquities, in a grand room with many columns on the ground floor. This is by far the largest and finest collection of objects of ancient art in existence. Connoisseurs admit that it far surpasses the collection at Naples, and the ordinary visitor to both places can have no difficulty in pronouncing in favour of the Russian one. Kertch is at the entrance to the Sea of Azoff from the Black Sea. It occupies the site of a Greek colony founded about 600 B.C. among the Scythians, on what was called the Cimmerian Bosphorus. This collection, however, shows that these Cimmerians became very enlightened people in art and manufacture. As you look at case after case filled with articles of wonderful workmanship and fitted for many uses, you appreciate that profound aphorism of M. Taine in regard to ancient culture and life—"A civilisation as complete as ours of to-day; as complete, only different." The richest treasures here are those dug out of a mound, in which was found buried a priestess of the goddess Ceres, along with her four chariot horses and their trappings. Here are gold ornaments, which, it is no exaggeration to say, defy copying by modern jewellers; necklaces, earrings

blue-enamelled gold tiaras, bracelets, golden collars, face-masks, combs, dress-clasps and buttons—all these are covered with most exquisitely fine carving in patterns of purest taste. I have only space to enumerate a few of the more interesting objects among the thousands before us here. There are many vessels of old glass, drinking horns, ladles for wine, and even wine-strainers. Then there are lyres and musical instruments, looking-glasses, and lamps. You see the pigments with which old Cimmerian coquettes used to paint their faces. There are the huckle-bones which were used to play a Greek game something like our shinty. A touching object is a small-jointed wooden doll. It was found in the coffin of a child, buried with it. It is now thousands of years since its little Græco-Scythian owner played with this favourite toy, but we can still see (through the glass frame, for you are not allowed to touch it) that it is in good enough repair to please a Russian baby of to-day who might get hold of it. Even exhibits with humorous suggestions are not absent, and the difference between modern and ancient etiquette is shown in a curious relic. It is a wooden small-tooth comb, and is labelled in Greek "a present from a sister." In the nineteenth century the probable effect of such a present would be that the recipient, instead of proceeding to manipulate her own locks with the gift, would attempt to pull out those of the donor. Leaving this collection you reflect that here, as throughout the building, much that makes it a glory of Russia might have belonged to England. Greek antiquities were lying about Kertch at the time of the Crimean war, but unfortunately the French and English "Jacks Ashore" did not even appropriate them, but contented themselves with destroying them, not from any worse motive than want of thought. Then, again, nearly 200 of the best pictures in this place are formed by the Walpole Collection. They belonged to the father of Horace Walpole, and were actually obtained by Russia for the sum of £35,000—for the whole of them. English writers on the subject are never tired of mourning over the irreparable loss occasioned to art in England by letting these works go away from us to a foreign country for such a small sum.

The last part of the Hermitage I will take readers to will not keep us long. In fact, a long contemplation of this part—the modern Russian pictures—would induce colour-blindness, if not idiocy. I do not wish to speak too hardly of them, and

there are several really fine exceptions, but as a rule they are the worst things perpetrated by clumsy brush, crude colours, and execrable taste I have ever seen hung in a gallery. The poor Black Sea has been specially badly treated, "libelled," as Mr. Ruskin would put it; a "Sunrise on the Black Sea," by Aivazoffsky, is something which it is a torture to look at. It might represent the infernal lake in Dante's poem conceived in a nightmare by a mad artist. A "Storm," on the same travestied sheet of water, by the same artist, has the merit of being utterly unintelligible; it is as impossible to criticise it as it is to identify any object in it. These canvasses, be it remembered, are sixteen or twenty feet square. A "Creation of the World" by a Russian artist represents that great act as making chaos worse confounded. There is a picture by Verestchagin, a battle-field scene, all skulls, dismembered limbs, and carrion fowl; this is clever in execution, but hideous in effect. It is entertaining to note how the few visitors who enter this room are compelled into ejaculations—not of admiration—before these pictures. A Frenchman came in the only day I visited it, and I heard him saying to his boy with him "Passons vite, mon enfant. Mon Dieu! c'est quelque chose de terrible." Russian art has certainly no past; it has no present (if these pictures are typical examples); so we may hope to recognise that product of Muscovite civilisation in the future. Meantime, as we step out into the sunlight, it is strange to think that the only department not admirable within this great Russian Palace of Art is that which Russians have executed themselves.



## SIGNS AND SIGHTS.

THE best descriptions of places are usually written by strangers in them, who have not had the keener edge of their vision blunted by the daily sight of the same objects. Those things which while you are in a place soon become so constantly familiar that there it is trivial to talk of them, are the very things most characteristic to tell about when you leave the place. These necessary platitudes apply to St. Petersburg, and in it more particularly to what may be considered very commonplace objects—its signboards. But they are not to be despised, they are what give the streets of St. Petersburg most of their local colour. Every visitor to the Russian capital will find, if he pictures up one of its streets in his mind's eye after he has left it, that the signboards bring themselves most vividly before him. Everything around you looks so European till you see these great boards with big strange letters on them six feet long. They at once carry your thoughts to Greece, the East, or Asia. It is a strange fact that these placards, with their monumental and important-looking capital letters, have somehow the effect of dignifying whatever they are employed on. The words are so long and the letters so large that you cannot help thinking they deserve special attention, and that the obscure hieroglyphics must enshroud something it will be very interesting to know. Of course, you are nearly always disillusioned. You drive past a large building; its name is daubed on it in impressive gilt letters of a size and uncouthness which look positively startling; many of them look like a small procession of points of exclamation. You would almost expect them to signify, say, "Here dynamite is distributed free of charge," "Refuge for Nihilists in distress," or "Infernal machines here neatly mended and repaired," or something of like nature. You spell the letters out, however, and find you are before an innocent factory of "Lemon Soap," whatever that may be, and you are informed in letters in small type (they are only about three feet high, with commas the size of cannon-balls) that a smaller quantity of this soap will remove more dirt than any other kind. Another day we were struck by seeing a notice

painted on wood stuck across the opening of a shut gate. Of course we noticed it ; a Russian-lettered advertisement cannot be hid, and curiosity made us cross to see what it was ; it might be a notice from the police that anyone seen loitering here would at once be arrested, or it might proclaim that this was the modest portal of some extraordinary exhibition. A conscientious deciphering reduced its importance to this, "Two fine Gordon setter puppies, two months old, for sale within." We pass a shop-window and see a sheet of paper covered with large characters, in which we can recognise all the old Grecian letters, and so the sheet-bill has a semi-sacred look ; it resembles some text from the Greek Testament displayed by some missionary-minded shopkeeper, but it merely discloses (when we unravel it) the fact that here, as in so many other places, "A smart boy is wanted."

When I speak of "deciphering" these Russian placards, the word is really properly used. Not to know your A B C in Russian is not the disgraceful taunt which alphabetical ignorance is usually supposed to deserve. The thirty-six letters of the Russian alphabet require to be "writ large," so that those who run may read, for many of them are very confusing from their evident likeness to one another. It is now well known that the shortsightedness so prevalent among the Germans is, in a great measure, the result of reading in the rather confusing but picturesque old German type. But the Germans have an easy way out of the difficulty, which is denied to the Russians. Any German letter may be represented by a corresponding one in Roman type. But in Russian it may take four or five of our letters to represent the sound which one Russian letter thinks nothing of exacting from tortured articulating organs. For instance, there is one Russian letter which would always have to be represented by this combination, "shtch ;" this charming vocable may occur twice in a word of some ten or twelve letters which are hardly less pronounceable than itself, so that the hissing sounds emitted from the mouth of the tyro in Russian conversation are not unlike those produced by an infant trying to imitate the sound of a steam-engine. It will be seen, therefore, that the Russians will always need to puzzle and weaken their own eyes (and those of other nations) by their strange letters and more hopeless caligraphy. Reading these, however, has not yet caused an appreciable amount of myopia in the Russian people's vision, for the best of all

reasons—that they do not read their own language very assiduously. The lower classes cannot, many of the upper classes who can do not, and, if they do, all Russian literature would not take a studious man very long to read through, beginning at Lomonosoff and Karamsin, till he reached the masterpieces of Turgenieff and Tolstoi.

A sign-board which seems to distinguish almost half of the buildings in St. Petersburg is that of the Russian Eagle spread out, or “displayed,” as it is called in heraldry. All military institutions, stores, and magazines of ammunition are branded with this device. These military stores are simply surprising in their extent. St. Petersburg always appears as if it thought it was on the eve of standing a six months’ siege. As you drive along some of the streets leading from the Preobrajenski Place to the Prospect, these magazines for arms extend alongside of you in a long avenue till you think they will never end. One line of these one-storied buildings stretches, I should think, for about half-a-mile, and you sometimes steal a glimpse of the yards and open courts behind gates painted in striped bands of black and white. These yards are sometimes acres in extent, and are filled with pyramids of shells, cannon-balls, and a crowd of gun-carriages, wheels, and other implements of war. There is also accommodation for plenty of men to use these destructive implements. Some of the great barracks can hold thousands of soldiers, and the city seems swarming with them everywhere.

This afternoon we hear the bugle-calls echoing about the courts of the Winter Palace, and we see a troop of soldiers—about 200 or 300—coming out of one of its carefully-sentried gates and marching down the Neffsky. They belong to the Palace Guard, and are being marched off to attend afternoon prayers and vespers in the Kazan Church, whither we follow them. I have seen altogether thousands of soldiers, at different times and places, marching in Russia, and have always been highly struck and greatly surprised by one thing—their slovenliness. Military men can judge of their warlike capabilities, but it is certain they do not impress even civilian eyes very favourably in times of peace. There is nothing smart or quick in their demeanour or gait. If you watch them at drill, they seem to perform all evolutions in a heavy, slow manner. Their way of walking in marching is remarkable. They slouch along, never lifting their feet very high from the ground. If you

watch their legs, you see that they are never once straight at the knee-joints. As a result, the body is always thrown a little forward from the waist, giving a somewhat clumsy appearance. I have no doubt that this habit of walking is the result of having to constantly trudge through deep snow, when, as is known, you can get along quicker by placing the body in the positions just mentioned. I should say, too, that as a rule the Russian soldiers whom I have seen marching take wonderfully long steps, longer than any other Continental soldiers, and they get over the ground very quickly. The company we have been watching now are no exception to this rule, and as we know we shall be able to have a prolonged view of them as they stand in the church at their enforced devotions, we follow after them at a slower non-military pace, finding it pleasanter to look leisurely at pretty women, handsome dresses, shop-windows, and whizzing sledges in the bright Prospect. A short walk, enjoying these sights of the gay world of St. Petersburg, soon brings us to the great Place opposite the church.

This "Church of our Lady of Kazan" is such a magnificent place that before leaving St. Petersburg I must make some mention of it. It stands back eighty or a hundred yards from the street, in the centre of a grand semi-circular colonnade, built in imitation of St. Peter's at Rome. The effect produced by the church, with its fine portico and gilded dome 230 feet high, standing in the centre of this great semi-circular line, made up of a forest of pillars, is grand indeed. It has been well remarked that there is on the whole no finer conception for a church than this. The church appears standing back from the busy, giddy street, and yet, as it were, throwing out its arms, inviting its worshippers to enter, and alluring them on to its doors by the contemplation of a splendid procession of pillars, making beautiful architectural effects. At present, however, people take a short cut right up to the doors across the semi-circular Place. The tread of many church-going feet has melted the snow and made a track, with its wet pavestones showing out as an irregular black line across the area white with a powdery covering of fresh-fallen snow.

Russians are justly proud of this church as having been erected by a native artist, Varonikin. It is a noble building. And so it should be, for it has cost £600,000. Before St. Isaac's overtopped it in gorgeous magnificence, it was the Cathedral of St. Petersburg. But celebrated as the church is,

it is chiefly revered as containing the far more celebrated miracle-working image of "Our Lady of Kazan." Climbing a flight of steps about twelve feet high, we find the entrance is very dark from the shadows cast by the thick groups of high pillars. But as we grope our way in through the heavy swinging door, we are soon in a blaze of gorgeous taper-light. The entrance door here is in the transept, so that you at once find yourself before the splendid silver screen, fifteen feet high, running across the church. In other churches you are generally bewildered by the gorgeous yellow glare of gold and red-painted pictures, but in this beautiful interior silver takes the place of the more gaudy metal, and you can admire its white sheen, and the mild delicate tints of grey and light brown marbles. The church is about 260 feet long, and 250 feet broad across the transepts. The floor is of jasper and smooth marbles. The rows of pillars which divide it into nave and aisles are double. Each pair of pillars consists of two magnificent shafts of granite, all in one piece, and nearly forty feet high, a space of about eighteen inches being between their towering polished surfaces. There are about sixty of these stupendous columns in this church, and (as may be fancied) the varying effects produced by the constantly changing vistas they present as you walk among them are unusually picturesque. They stand on a pediment of bronze, which does not look very high at first, till walking up to it you find it is high enough to make a comfortable chair to rest on. You can walk away down to the parts of the church quite empty, near the great closed front door, where you can sit down with your back to a pillar separating you from the hazy glow at the iconostasis. Here the grey evening light is shining in through windows of colourless unstained glass, the thick bulk of the pillar behind you (each is more than two feet in diameter) makes the sweet harmonies of the responses of the choir reach you fainter in volume of sound, like their own echo. Then as you rise, turn, and walk up the nave again, your gaze is met and dazzled by the great silver wall with its square pictures and its gems flashing out like fiery eyes. Below it are the high silver stands filled with hundreds of blazing tapers, and beneath them again the forms of the crowd of worshippers, a confused mass of sombre figures dressed in black or dark clothes.

We are in Lent, so there is a large gathering of people filling all the space across the transepts, pressing up as near as they



can to the sacred pictures. Among them all you notice that intense devoutness so characteristic of a Russian congregation. It is touching to see how bent old men with long apostle-like venerable beards of Russian luxuriance, and decrepit old women in shabby fur cloaks all worn away except the skin, bend down in spite of their aged limbs, and vigorously struggle up again, crossing themselves eagerly the while. You also see what so many people have remarked—a peasant mother with her little child in her arms, guiding its senseless hands to form the sign of the cross. Mingled among these humble folk are ladies beautifully dressed in soft rich furs or handsome mantles, and a young exquisite dressed in fashionably-cut clothes from a London or St. Petersburg tailor rubs shoulders with a moujik in his sheepskin of the year before last. There are never any seats in a Russian church, so everyone stands wherever they can find place for their feet; the motto of the church in this matter is "All are equal in rank before God." As we stand in the middle of this motley throng, I am surprised to get a tap on the shoulder from a man behind. He hands me an unlighted taper, and, mentioning his name, says it is to be placed as his offering before "Our Lady of Kazan." I hand the taper on to the man in front of me, he passes it and the message on to his neighbour, and so on till it arrives in front of the shrine and is lighted and placed in the candelabra before the image, where its flame joins that of others burning round it, paying homage to "Our Lady of Kazan."

To describe fully—so as to give an adequate idea of its gorgeous treasures—the iconostasis in this beautiful church would take up all the rest of this chapter, so I merely mention some of its jewelled marvels. The glory round the head of the picture of the Kazan Virgin has stones in it valued at £15,000. In the centre above the forehead is a great sapphire, said to be the finest in the world. It is two inches long and about one and a half inches in diameter, and it shines with an exquisite liquid purity of colour more purple than blue. The various white brilliants in different parts of the screen give out all the prismatic colours of the rainbow. They sparkle just like dew-drops in sunlight. These lighter stones have their brilliant effect highly enhanced by being placed in the setting of pale burnished silver, instead of against a yellow background of gold, which would kill the delicate tints thrown off their glittering facets.

The picture of the Virgin of Kazan itself is a disappointment artistically (as usual in Russia) when you remember the great renown which it has acquired during its life of many hundred years. The Virgin's face is of the usual Byzantine pattern—full face, oval in outline, with almond-shaped eyes, and badly drawn—also as usual—wherever it was possible for the artist to go wrong. Her expression is well known to the student of Byzantine art—heavy, wooden-looking, and meaningless, divided between sulkiness and graciousness. And yet the traveller who could look at this daub without feelings of the deepest interest would be so dull-headed that he should have stayed at home. This picture has been the means of inspiring countless thousands of Russian soldiers with a fervid hope and careless bravery which has won many a battle for the Russian standards, and added towns and miles of territory to the Russian empire. In the middle of the sixteenth century, this picture was really the battle-flag with which Ivan the Terrible led his troops on and defeated the Tartars, and wrested from them their great city of Kazan. It is hard to avoid treating this little image after the method of Hans Christian Andersen, and endowing it with life and feeling when speaking of its exciting vicissitudes. What scenes it has looked on! It has pursued the flying hordes of the Tartars over the plains of Asia; it has witnessed the fierce struggle on the low banks of the Volga, and seen its broad, shallow, muddy stream crimsoned with blood. Now, in its gorgeous niche on the screen in this church, the sounds rising before it are those of hymns and prayers, softly sung in rich harmonies of voices deep and strong of bearded priests, mingled with boys' pure treble; but it has also heard on the rushing field the battle-shout of the Russians, "In God is our hope," and the savage cries of Tartars mingled with the groans and curses of soldiers dying from agonising wounds. Its surface has been begrimed by the smoke of battle, but now the fumes of the incense thickly rising merely obscure it slightly for a few seconds. Its gold covering has reflected the fierce light of conflagrations of blazing cities and of pillaged and smouldering villages; now tapers and ever-burning sacred lamps lift up their unflickering steady flame before it in the quiet air of this church.

Those who think that too much is made of this picture by alluding to it at length must remember that it is looked

upon by the Russians as a Palladium—a protecting defence—of their country. The Virgin herself could not receive more heartfelt homage if she now descended and revealed herself to the congregation before us, than does this painted image of her. As a great English writer has remarked, the picture-worship bears as important a relation to the member of the Russian Church as does the keeping of the Sabbath to the Scotch Presbyterian, or singing hymns to the Methodist. What we have to notice as philosophical observers is not whether this tenet is rational or not, but that it is firmly held and eagerly believed by millions of members of the Russian Church—by far the greatest National Church in the world. When, however, faith becomes debased into such docile credulity as this picture exacts from those who reverence it, it is impossible for even a sympathetic observer to avoid a smile. This picture has effected miraculous cures which throw into the shade any of the mundane healing exploits of all the panaceas ever vaunted by patent medicine vendors. It has set at nought the natural laws of rest and motion, of limit and space, for it has transported itself from place to place as with wings. It would stand a burning test with any of Milner's patent fire-proof safes, for has it not been picked up among charred beams and the smouldering embers of a huge fire and been found to be unsinged, untarnished, in every way unscathed? It is possible my readers may be inclined to doubt these things, but then they are not faithful votaries of the Russian Church.

In the meantime we must not forget to take our survey of some hundreds of our friends the soldiers whom we saw coming to church—that is, if readers will pardon the incongruity of considering men of war in a place devoted to the preaching of peace. They are arranged, in lines of six or seven men across, down the nave of the church, so we can observe them from the aisles sheltered sufficiently by the great pillars to prevent our observation intruding on their devotions. These devotions are strange and mechanical enough. They go through them with a rigid precision of a drill exercise. At the end of each prayer with the response "*Gospodin pomilui*" (Lord have mercy on us), they bend down three times, never breaking line, their bodies moving like that of one man; even in crossing themselves they all finish, touching their breast and shoulders with the thumb and forefinger, at exactly the same

moment of time. Though they conscientiously keep "eyes front" all the time, they seem listless and uninterested in the service, only waking up to do their reverences with always the same uniformity of motion, just like the different cornstalks in a field bowing down together as the wind blows over them, though I admit this convenient simile is too poetic for the occasion. These soldiers are worthy a description, as being good types of the finer specimens of the Russian Army, which numbers many thousands like them. They have leather boots, very clumsily made—evidently the pattern for the contractor is the largest-footed man in the regiment—worn outside the trousers, and reaching up to a few inches below the knee. They have greatcoats made of very coarse brown serge of the colour of coffee with milk in it. These coats are made very loose in the body, and at the neck button right up over the chin, just under the lips, and besides this have a collar which can be tucked up to protect the back of the neck. The coat reaches down close to the feet, and must be very heavy to carry. Altogether it is not unlike an English "ulster." It has nickel or steel buttons. At the waist is a black glazed leather belt, to which hangs a sword in a scabbard of usual form. A cap, without ear-flaps and without any peak in front, something like a Scotch cap, and dark grey or brown in colour, completes the soldier's toilette. The men now before us come from the south and east of Russia. They are fine-looking fellows, though we might call them rather "loosely put together." All are nearly six feet high, and broad-backed. A peculiarity, however, of most of them is that their shoulders are very sloping. These have no hair on their faces, except sometimes a very short yellow or flaxen moustache. The best way to describe their faces is to say that they have much flesh and little features. The face is very round, the lips slightly thick, but, in spite of this, the mouth is generally the best feature—firm, and yet easily relaxing into a good-natured smile; the nose is thin and rather short, the eyes usually grey and narrow, and the hair always straight and growing longer than most soldiers of other nations wear it. Altogether these soldiers impress you as being good material, though rather raw. They certainly have none of that spruce, smart, tight-laced appearance of our Tommy Atkins, though man for man I should think these Russians would weigh from a stone to a stone and a half heavier than their English compeers.

When we leave the church there is time for a twilight walk through the half-shut shops on the Peas Prospects before dinner, and then everyone who wishes to be amused does *the* thing for this evening, that is to go and hear the new Italian Opera Company at the Fantaisie Theatre. This bright little house is one of the most charming places of amusement in St. Petersburg. We direct our sledge to it—to No. 38 Moika Street—and reading the bill on the door find we are going to hear “Vsay Vmaskaraday.” This turns out to be Russian for Pedrotti’s neat little opera, “Tutti in Maschera” (all masked). Buying a yellow play-bill for ten copecks, about 2d., we find that the performance is thoroughly Italian. The names of the performers are Rinaldi, Tancioni, and others which carry your thoughts to theatres in warm Italy. Though, of course, all the piece is played in Italian, most of the Russians present follow it with ease, and see all the points in the witty dialogue almost as quickly as would a Florentine audience. Nearly everyone around us is talking French, a fact which you generally notice in Russian theatres, for people who would talk Russian to each other at home will speak in French while they are out for an evening’s entertainment.

You walk downstairs into the theatre, and find that it is almost like a large drawing-room. Everything is so different from the barn-like look of many smaller Continental or English theatres. As you walk about like everyone else (including many ladies) cigarette smoking between the acts, you may wander into a delightful little *foyer*, fitted up like a rockery and fernery. The entrances to it are made of arched pieces of wood bent like boughs of trees, and, regardless of climate and season, plants with great, green, fleshy leaves, and many pots with bright blossoms are plentifully scattered about. Even when you go up to what we would call the bar, to have a tumbler of tea or a liqueur glass of Listoffka, you find yourself before a little grotto with bottles ranged round on projecting curved ledges instead of on straight, regular shelves, and the big *samovar* is encased in a layer of tree-cork, so that the fragrant tea seems to flow from out of a tree trunk. Everywhere some pretty little contrivance evidencing care and thoughtful taste meets your eye. We leave thinking that in this as in many other things, London, and other places too, might do worse than bestow a little study on St. Petersburg, with a view to copying some of its more luxurious institutions.

## RUSSIANS.

THE story is no longer in its first youth of the Teutonic professor who wished to write a monograph on the camel, but not being successful in procuring a specimen of that unwieldy beast, proceeded, nothing daunted, to "evolve him," humps and all, out of his inner consciousness. In the same way with the Russians, an almost complete ignorance of them is the sole qualification many people have for forming a judgment on them. The warrant for many opinions held about them and their country is that neither they nor their country have ever been seen by foreigners who hold these opinions. Hence it is too often the case in English-speaking countries that if anyone ventures to use, with regard to this great nation, any words not hostile or suspicious, he is at once supposed to be unpatriotic. He is looked on as would be a person who counselled a man pursued by a mad dog to try the effect of kindness on it, and turn round and pet it. The position of anyone who ventures to say truthfully what he really has found the Russians to be should be clearly understood. Those who only wish to hear what would be pleasant to them need not listen to him. If it is accepted as an inevitably doomed law that English and Russians are always to be implacable and bitter enemies, then (though he may view the prospect with horror) each honest man of either nation will simply find it almost impossible to take an unbiassed view of his national foe. But this view is surely not to be accepted; those who do so hardly read aright the whole spirit of modern history. Even granting this rampant hypothesis, the more impartially we study Russians as they are the better. Such study may lead to a better mutual understanding, which may induce friendly relations, while, if relations are to be hostile, the more we know about a foe the more effectually shall we be able to discover his weak points, and therefore make the weapons we use against him more deadly. In reading what I say I simply ask readers to free their minds from that deceiving quality which is so conspicuously absent from the average Russian mind—prejudice.

Here I simply give my own experiences and impression; penned long before this date. When we were in Russia (1883) there were no rumours of European wars or Asiatic difficulties. Hence in what I say I simply repeat what were undoubted facts at a certain time. More recent or previous visitors to the country may have found things different; any variance in their experience will only valuably add to data on the subject. The besetting sin of travellers is, of course, that they are apt to put down as a national characteristic that of some individual they have been talking to, when even in him it may turn out to be some rare exceptional eccentricity. Reasoning of this sort is not infrequent. A Frenchman watching the English mail come in at Boulogne pier, and being attracted by the appearance of an absconding bagman, is said to have pencilled in his note-book, "the average English gentleman dresses in bad taste; he wears trousers with large check patterns, and a loud breast-pin like a horse-shoe." In like manner an English lady who had not received her proper change in a shop, and whose umbrella had been abstracted by a dirty little Roman urchin in the Piazza di Spagna, is reported to have written home, "*All* Italians are dirty, and are thieves and cheats; they rob you *whenever* they get an opportunity, and *never* wash."

In Russia, however, it is easier to form an opinion of the people as a whole than in other countries. The reason of this is simple. They are not split up into so many social classes as are other nations. Also, as is well known, any social classes a traveller does come in contact with consist of far fewer individuals than you find in any other Continental peoples. A great middle class—which would be the central pith and sturdy strength of this as of any other country—is really only in process of formation in Russia. The broad base on which the Russian system rests, the peasant—the "moujik"—is almost as unvarying in character as are the boundless wind-swept plains he inhabits, and from the fruits of which he can only earn a bare mouthful to keep life together, though he works like a slave, which he still practically is. To find out the varying distinguishing differences between one moujik and another would take half a life-time spent in philanthropic work or close scientific observation. All that I or any ordinary traveller can know about him is that you always have, some way or another, a kindly feeling for him. You can find out for yourself that he is good-natured, humorous to a degree which the soil-working

peasantry of other countries never attain, hardworking, and, as far as you can judge, honest in any little dealings you have with him. Besides this, all that you can see in him is that he still copies his Scythian forefathers of thousands of years ago in wearing his shirt outside his trousers, and that, as far as civilisation goes, he can hardly afford now to despise their state. Lastly, he is fond of drink, and its effect on him makes him laughing and childish instead of sullen or dangerous. He is very ignorant, and he is religious, three-quarters of his religion being quite indistinguishable from superstition in gross and infantile forms.

With the other classes it is different, you get opportunities of judging them which are as ample as they are delightfully pleasant. The people a traveller most usually meets fall into three groups—landed proprietors (many of whom are noblemen), Government officials (among whom I include military men), and commercial men (comprising a large number of foreigners). To begin by a summing up, it may at once be said that we found that the stranger—or at least the English stranger—in Russia gets a better and more kindly reception than in any other country we have visited in Europe.

From the moment you cross the frontier, every Russian seems to act to you as a guest in his own country. If he is inquisitive, he is also equally communicative. He will put himself to a great deal of trouble to oblige you; he is amused at your wonder at the new and strange customs of his land, and is proud and happy to explain them to you and help you to accommodate yourself to them. But the most refreshing thing about these Russians is the honest, open, manly way in which they bear themselves with you. They let you see that they consider themselves, both nationally and personally, quite your equal, and therefore do not assume either a patronising superiority or a cringing inferiority with regard to you. In this they resemble the English very strongly. In fact, paradoxical as it may seem, in many matters the Russians more nearly resemble the English than do any other Continental nation. Looked at politically, we are accustomed—and it seems rightly—to regard Russia as sly, treacherous, and untrustworthy. All I can say is that I found it impossible to discover these qualities in Russians in private life. On the contrary, they show a frank openness and a healthy regard for your good opinion of and respect for them. There, as I often noticed travelling, the



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these other countries have desirable qualities not possessed by the Russians, and therefore the necessary allusions we are going to make will not be resented. Most English travellers, even the best friends of the French, will admit that that *esprit Gaulois* which they are quite ready to admire, is too often displayed in irony against their "insularity" or other British foibles. The best friends of the Teuton know that his independence is apt sometimes to become very near overbearingness. Dwellers in Italy know that the Italian is more ready to look on you as a man and human brother in proportion as he thinks he can get less pecuniary advantage from you. As for the Swiss (whom a traveller meets) his national independence is eaten out by the cancer of tourist entertaining, and he simply looks on you as an eating and sleeping animal wearing pockets filled with precious metal. Not one of these things mars the enjoyment of a trip in Russia. You are neither sneered at, bullied, nor is a vein opened in you for gold-letting. Of course there are darker shades of Russian character brought before you. These I shall fully allude to further on; but they are not the failings mentioned just above.

The most salient and brightest point in the Russian is his unbounded hospitality. Too much praise can hardly be given him for the way in which he entertains strangers and does not take them in. This is almost a national point of honour. I translate from a celebrated Russian author, who says :—"The Russian people, like every other, has its excellences and deficiencies. But the ordinary Russian man is honest, industrious, affable, and sociable, but above all things—hospitable. The Russian 'bread and salt' (hospitality) is notorious to every nation." From personal experience we know this praise to be well bestowed. It would take too long to tell all the proofs we have had of Russian goodwill. As you travel along in the train, and get out to have tea or refreshments, the Russians insist on your partaking of it with their party, of course paying for your portion. At a Russian first-class dinner at one of their unrivalled railway buffets, I have been the guest of two or three travelling companions, although naturally reluctant to accept such a profuse

liberality as they heap on you in wine and viands. But it is no use refusing ; they will not accept it, and would be horrified if you showed you thought yourself under any obligation to them. Several times we have been thus "treated," using the word in two senses. At Kieff I was twice invited by gentlemen to come out and see their country houses. We had exchanged cards and been thrown together for a short time ; this and the fact of being a stranger was my only introduction to them. Then, again, if you are seen sitting, a lonely traveller, at your table during dessert you will be courteously asked to join a small party of Russians at their table, over cigars, coffee, and liqueurs. There you are sure of spending a pleasant, sociable half-hour—they can often speak English to you, more often French or German, and on one occasion we spoke in Italian. Or, you go to drive in a sledge to see the town : on several occasions a Russian gentleman has come downstairs to the door and carefully advised us what to see, explaining everything to the *isvostchik* in better Russian than we, of course, were capable of. At Kieff, again, a note kindly given us by the superintendent of the Wolocyszka railway line (a Russian) was the means of getting us under a roof when all the hotels were so full that hardly any but old customers had a chance of admittance. These are only some examples out of many marks of kindness we have constantly received in Russia. They may seem trivial, but they are weighty evidences of the sort of spirit which prompted them, and one may travel a good deal in other countries without finding their parallel. We must confess that we were sometimes almost sorry to be obliged to contrast this sort of treatment with that which would be experienced by a Russian stranger in London speaking English very imperfectly. He would not find many casual acquaintances thoughtful enough to direct him in his wanderings over the city ; our dislike of officious interference would most likely force him to be dependent on the polite though categorical directions of the policemen at street corners as he groped his way about from place to place.

There is one most striking witness to this Russian friendliness and kindness of disposition to one's fellows. It is that unconscious witness which cannot lie and more than any other infallibly declares the true inmost thought of a people—Language. The Russian phrase for "one another" is "*Droog language*." The Russian phrase for "one another" is "*Droog drooga*," or "*droogomu*." Now this word "*Droog*" is also the

Russian for "friend." Hence "one another" is really represented by "friend to friend." An improving sermonette might be preached on this linguistic fact. The Russians, by their own language, show that they look upon everyone as a friend. The pronoun is indefinite, "any other man;" why then it necessarily follows (according to them) that he must be a friend.

The most distinguishing characteristic of Russians of the upper classes has been agreed upon by many travellers—intelligence. They have generally travelled much and to advantage. They possess that distinctive seal of the Slavic nature—impressibility. They have never been in a country without learning anything of it except about its hotels and shops; they have always mixed with its people. They never come home again having been away in body, but in mind always wrapped up in the narrower atmosphere of the ideas or prejudices of their own country. Their great linguistic talents allow them to take fuller advantage of foreign residence than any other living people. Hence they will be found to be the most cosmopolitan people in Europe. This goes so far that, as is well known, they often lose all individuality. At foreign hotels in Continental towns it is generally easy to pick out a Frenchman, a German, an Englishman, and so forth. But the Russian is hard to classify; only those who know his country very well can identify him. He generally passes for a Frenchman, but you may mistake him for a German too. The Russian is, in fact, in the strictest sense, a man of the world. This universality of nature, which makes him lost in a crowd out of his country, is the quality which makes strangers most highly praise his company at home. He can adapt himself to almost any society. We know no more charming companion than an educated Russian gentleman. We do not hesitate to say that, looked at merely from this social point of view, he is the highest product of the human race. He is courteous, entertaining, a first-class talker in several languages, liberal, and tolerant beyond measure. He is both humorous and witty—as witty as a Frenchman, without that acidity which sometimes over-sharpens a Gallic epigram. The time passes more quickly in the company of Russians than with any people I know. Even when they are not brilliant they have a quaint way of expressing themselves, and out-of-the-way turns of phrase which make you remember what they say, even though it is in itself nothing startling. One of the few of them who

look any interest in the place said to me one day, "Australia!—dreadful country! I should starve of hunger and thirst there. You live on gold and wool; I have read you have no water, and I am sure you cannot make wine." A Russian, too, is always considerate. To use what I may call two homely pedal metaphors supplied by our language, he will neither "tread on your toes" nor "put his foot in it" in conversation.

In Russia it is very interesting to notice a contrast which is inevitably brought before you—that is, unless your mental eyes are blindfolded by too thick a layer of national prejudice. I allude to the difference between those two very important classes in either country, the English and Russian country gentleman. Regarding them both as distinct human beings, to say that in many ways the Russian was not the superior would not be patriotic, but stupid. To deny that in the Englishman are many most admirable qualities, which only exist in the Russian character as gaps, would be as false as it would be distastefully unwelcome to English-speaking readers. To begin with the points of resemblance between the English country squire and his Russian counterpart, both are fond of the country, and enjoy its open-air, healthy life. Both are usually ardent sportsmen. As is well known, Russia is the best country for varied sport in Europe. The sportsman can find excitement in hunting such quadrupeds as bears, wolves, elks, foxes, lynxes, or even reindeer, on the ground; he can thin the population of fishes by landing splendid specimens gasping on the low banks of the rivers; he can send his shot through the air for pigeons and other innumerable kinds of winged game; and finally, if such an animal as the salamander exists, and gives good sport, an excellent field for its preservation will be found in the fire lakes of Baku. To the Russian, quite as appropriately as to the Englishman, may be applied the saying, "It is a fine day; come, let us go out and kill something." Both classes of men whom we are now considering are conservative, or old-fashioned, in their political ideas. Now to come to the points of difference. Intellectually, it must be confessed the Englishman must give way to the Russian. The Russian can put up with, fall in with, and understand habits of life and thought widely differing from his own. He will feel himself equally at home when he is not at home. He can take his place in any society in any country in Europe, speaking in any one or two of the chief languages.

He has read a good deal. He has very little reticent reserve in speech, and what he says is always worth saying. He is essentially broad-minded; he does not look on foreigners with an air of self-righteous tolerance or curious pity. He likes to make acquaintances, and takes trouble to be entertaining when he does so. As far as sparkle or brightness in conversation goes, the difference in a talk with fellow-travellers in a journey in the counties of Lincolnshire, Sussex, or Aberdeenshire, from one in the provinces of Orel, Toula, or Moscow is as the difference in their effervescing qualities between plum-duff and champagne. Now it will be admitted that many of the qualities described above would find their place only in a negative description of the English landed proprietor. But let us next look at the other side of the picture. The Russian may be charming as a separate personal acquaintance, but in all those great and more serious qualities which command our respect rather than amuse our intellect, and which go to make up the collective strength of a great nation, the Englishman (of the class we are dealing with) is immeasurably superior. The English proprietor is, above all things, generally a good landlord, he works hard on his estate, looks carefully after its farming, and is a good enough husbandman to succeed in making it at least pay. The Russian very often neglects entirely the management of his property for sporting or idleness. Sometimes, in a sudden whim, he leaves it altogether for a long period to look after itself, or rather to be looked after by a bailiff—a manager who will find it hard to give a satisfactory account of his stewardship. Then, again, the Englishman is steady of purpose and thoughtful in his work. The Russian is nothing if not erratic, and agile in jumping at every theory which comes within his reach. Lastly, in that great quality of strict morals and pure life, which is admitted to be of such great importance in fostering a lasting national vitality, the Englishman must always appear to Russians, and to a sojourner in Russia, as so immeasurably above them as to be an unattainable ideal.

This erratic vein in Russians (I speak now of all of them) is so patent that to remark on it is not a matter of ethnological philosophic analysis, but of the most ordinary everyday common-sense. A valet, a commercial traveller, would notice it as much as a visionary statesman or a *doctrinaire* author making a book about the country. The Russian is too sharp about everything to be sure about anything. People who know

the country are so familiar with what I say here that they would consider it tiresome to read, but for them I need not write. The Slavonian mind is so wonderfully quick in comprehension, so marvellously ready of sympathy, that it takes up everything in turn, hardly ever fails in what it takes up, but only slines at it for a time, and then drops it for the newest sensation. Talk half-an-hour with an educated Russian, you will touch on a surprising variety of subjects. Russian society is always, as we should say, "off its head" on some subject. Now it is spiritism, now phrenology, now vegetarianism, now brain-reading, or, again, that most monstrous invention of mischievously active brains which I spoke of in a former chapter—psychopathy. I cannot too forcibly direct readers' attention to these facts. It explains a large part of Russian character, and hence Russian action. It is owing to this that the educated Russian is generally, strictly speaking, a thorough sceptic in religion and everything else. Having tried everything and stuck to nothing (intellectually, I mean), having seen too much to restfully concentrate observation on anything, he is very apt to become a Cynic. It is not then to be wondered at if he becomes a Pessimist, and takes either a hopeless view of everything in regard to reform, or is ready to grasp at anything to bring a change about. This Pessimism can be too clearly seen in Russian literature. It is no abstruse matter. It is a real blight over the great mass of men who could be leaders in their country as we understand the term, and its apathetic indifference has done much to prevent the growth of healthy and beneficial political opinions in a legitimate way.

This brings me to speak of that famous "Russky Petchal," or Russian sadness, which is so much talked about to travellers before going to Russia, that they feel bound to see it there. Every traveller must say what he saw, and we were not struck so much by this perpetual sadness in the people as by the extremeness they show in feelings and action. It seemed to us nonsense to say that they were always sad, but when they are sad they are certainly gruesomely so. The emotional nature of the Russian does not seem to know what moderation is. I know that everyone who is acquainted with the people will bear me out in this. The Russian is always either in a state of the most reckless exhilaration, or else he is plunged in a hopeless depression. You notice this extremeness in many ways. Russians are the most profusely

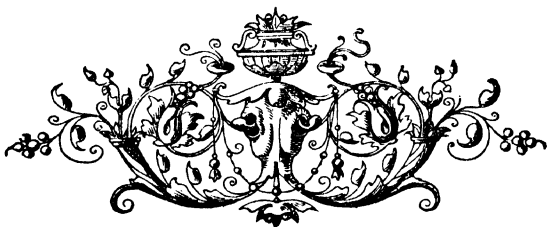
extravagant people travelling I ever knew. For instance the *pour-boires* I have seen them give to waiters and servants would astonish even an American, who, on his first visit to Europe, persisted in paying for things in dollars where francs are the currency. Visitors to other parts of the Continent may remember seeing the suites of rooms at the great hotels which, as it is popularly said, are reserved for "Russian lords and English fools." Their extravagance, in fact, often is what reminds you of that infusion of Oriental barbaric love of display which is so undoubtedly mixed in all Russian blood. This barbarian element is commemorated in that French proverb which is the "King Charles' head" of all writers on Russia, and which I am astounded I have not quoted before. It is "*Grattez le Russe, et au dessous vous trouverez l'ours*" (scratch a Russian's skin and you'll find underneath it the bear). The presents a rich Russian gives to his mistress would make an heirloom in a modest family. The suppers given by rich young fellows in the great cities are simply astounding in their lavish extent and in some of their details. You can hardly believe they are entertainments given by white men who are dressed in European clothes. Some of the things I heard about them would very properly shock the susceptibilities of readers. I leave these stories out of account, and discount much of many others. But even after making this allowance, I am justified in saying (unless both the Russians, who would hardly have been likely to exaggerate to an English stranger on such a subject, and many foreigners, who told us the same things and had no earthly object in trying to deceive us, lied uniformly) that these suppers, for licentious folly and dissolute indulgence, are the nearest European counterpart to the gayest banquets of the old Romans at their debased period. This extravagance in ideas is constantly cropping up before you in Russia. Russians think that you do not mind how much money you spend in travelling there. Often, on asking the probable cost of something we were advised to see or buy, have I been answered exactly in these words:—"There! it will only cost you a £10 note. What is that to an Englishman travelling in Russia?"

All this extravagance is, of course, a most unhealthy sign of Russian society. Many families have, as it were, bouts of two or three years' extravagant living (generally travelling abroad), to which succeed some years of necessary recuperative

retrenchment passed on the country estate, and giving up the annual visit to town. I have been told that in Russia people in the higher classes who have lost their money get the cold shoulder turned to them more decidedly than happens elsewhere; but this I am much inclined to doubt. On the contrary, what I saw of the Russians made me think that to their extravagance one might apply that comforting definition which so many a spendthrift has used as a flattering excuse, "generosity pushed to excess." The more one sees of the Russian, the more he is convinced that this want of cool-headed calculating moderation is the keynote to his whole character. Another matter which you notice is his truly Oriental dreaminess. A German thinks away on some subject till he becomes utterly confusing, if not confused; an Englishman "gives it up," and takes refuge in some practical action; a Frenchman does not think very long, but soon reduces his thoughts to a "*système*," with which, if realities do not coincide, they ought. But the Russian simply thinks till he very soon dreams. You can notice this in conversation. Any one who takes up a Russian story will notice the large amount of dashes, rows of dots, pauses, and blanks on its pages—places left to be vaguely filled in by the reader. You cannot imagine a Russian as a hard, stern logician, a discoverer of a new method in political economy, or a scientific statistician. Nothing is easier than to imagine him as a poet, or at least poetical. Turgenieff has said somewhere that a true Russian is never so happy as when he is smoking his cigar and thinking he has nothing else to do except that. Acute readers may think that this is equally true of other peoples, but the Russian can endure an amount of inaction that would become irksome to them. It is strange that even in men whom you would think most practical and active—Russian officers—you notice at times this engrossing reverie in a way which it would make you laugh to see, say, in English military men. Of course, in war, when they are at it, Russian officers are active enough. But often at the theatres and other places of amusement have I seen them—many of their handsome faces are before me as I write—pacing to and fro, their eyes cast down, wrapped in the deepest thought, looking as if they were "thinking unutterable things," serious, silent, and lost in themselves. To make sure that there was no possibility of this being fancy on our part, we have asked people in Russia about



it, and been assured that we were quite right. "It is our way," they have said to us. Accordingly I only tell the truth when, I say that if an Englishman, say Colonel N. or Captain Z., was seen wearing in a gay gathering such an expression as goes as a matter of course here in Russia, it would be surmised that he had made irreparable losses at his club, or that his mental condition was the cause of anxiety to his friends. As it has been well said, the Russians as well as the English sometimes "take their pleasure sadly." But as an analysis of mental depression would not make cheerful reading, we will shun it, and must reserve mention of other interesting (and some of them less pleasing) Russian characteristics for our next chapter.



## SPEECH AND MANNERS.

THAT unruly member, the tongue, will stand a traveller in better stead in Russia than anywhere else, *if* (and the "if" here represents a most important contingency) he knows how to use it. "What did you speak there?" is the question which is put as often to the traveller returned from Russia as the persistent twin interrogatory, "Was it very cold there?" French—as that omniscient monster the played-out Macaulay schoolboy is aware—is the foreign language most spoken by the Russians. Accordingly, it is generally supposed, as it is glibly put, that "French will carry you everywhere." This is only a half truth. French is absolutely necessary to the stranger if he means to enjoy the society of the best class of Russians; but its charming idioms would often fall on unappreciative ears. Snatches (if one may use the term to conversational phrases of leviathan size) of Russian, such as the numerals and some words of command, abuse, and entreaty, are almost indispensable. But strange as it may seem, we earnestly counsel all travellers who wish to gain much insight into habits and customs during a Russian tour to speak German also. German is every day becoming more spoken in Russia. Often and often have we spoken in German to people who had been years there, and who could talk hardly any French. A large number of the very people from whom you derive an immense amount of most trustworthy and interesting information—the commercial men, commercial travellers, bank managers, brokers, and shopkeepers, speak almost solely in their own language—that is, German. With the country gentry and fashionable people you use French; with mercantile town people, and most of the class below them, German.

It is usually supposed that all Russians speak a great many languages. They can if they choose easily do this, as almost anything they like to turn their head or hand to. But the chief mark of the people, linguistically, I found to be, not that they speak so many languages, but that the ones they do know they use with such marvellous perfection. For a rough-and-ready knowledge of many tongues a German is often a

Russian's equal, but the Russian is the only man in Europe who can speak almost any of its languages as if to the manner born. It is only in Russia itself that you can form an adequate idea of the great number of Russians who speak a foreign language perfectly. Frenchmen have told me that they speak French without the least foreign or provincial accent. Of this an Englishman cannot properly judge. I noticed, however, the same peculiarity in their French conversation which was pointed out years ago by Gautier—they use the word “absolument” constantly for “oui.” The repeated employment of this ponderous affirmation in light chat has a queer effect. They pronounce English almost perfectly. It is more by intonation than accent you can tell they are foreigners. The only modifications (one can hardly call them mistakes) I have heard in their speech is that they make the “s” sound too pronounced. For instance, in speaking of the Duke of Westminster (whom they are always asking you about, as they consider him the type of the enormous wealth of England) they say it as if spelt “Wessstminssterr.” They also say, “We *have been* at the theatre last night,” where we should say “We *were*, etc.” They manage our “th” in “the” perfectly, though they have no corresponding sound in their own language.

I must be pardoned saying a few words on this their own language. It must not be thought that because (as I have often mentioned) it contains long words and letters hard to pronounce that the Russian is an unattractive language. Nothing is further from the truth. As spoken by natives it is, perhaps, the most beautiful living language one can hear. It is wonderfully melodious, rich, and rhythmical. The Russians speak it (owing to the length of the words) in a slow, slightly sing-song chant, taking plenty of time to dwell lovingly (as it were) on the accented syllables. The sentences sound not unlike our blank verse, still more like the old Greek verse, recited with a rather marked scansion. Lomonosoff, one of its great masters, has said of his language (and I am sorry that readers have to find the Methuselah story of Charles V. embedded in a quotation as fine as it is true), “The Russian language, the parent of many others, is superior to all the languages of Europe, not only by the extent of the countries where it is dominant, but also by its own comprehensiveness and wideness. Charles V. said one ought to speak Spanish to

the divinity, French to one's friends, German to one's enemies, and Italian to ladies. But had he been acquainted with Russian, he would assuredly have added that one could speak it with each and all. He would have discovered in it the majesty of the Spanish, the vivacity of the French, the strength of the German, the sweetness of the Italian, and in addition energetic conciseness in its imagery with the richness of the Greek and Latin." This high praise by the father of Russian literature is echoed by the latest great master of Russian—one who by his supreme mastery of it has insured that his language, like his works, shall last as long as Russia herself—Ivan Turgeneff. He says (I quote from memory):—"In times of sorrow and trouble, and dark brooding over the fate of my country, you are my comfort and my staff, Oh great, glorious, and free Russian language. . . . It is impossible that such a language should not be the language of a great people." I have had the rich variety of the Russian language exemplified in a strange way. To amuse me, Russians have first recited to me a verse or two out of one of their best poets, say the "Guadalquiver Serenade" of Pushkin, or something of Lermontoff's; they have then suddenly begun to speak as they would if giving an angry lecture, rating a careless servant. The contrast was electrifying. You would hardly believe they were speaking the same language. First, a string of lovely words, which haunted the ear after they had ceased, and set themselves to music with their rich measured cadence, and then a volley of the most jarring ear-breaking sounds which seemed to utter awful anathemas. A menagerie-keeper would find it useful to learn this abusive Russian. If he addressed a "few well-chosen sentences" of it to any of his recalcitrant animal charges, he would soon cow into submission the most rampant tiger in the collection. It is a pity more interest is not taken in the Russian language. Scholars will find it highly interesting philologically. You sometimes meet the most unexpected old friends in a new face. For instance, when a Russian asks you, "Gavarheete pa Russky?" (do you speak Russian), this word for speak, "gavarheete," is said to be nothing more nor less than that used by a Scotch fishwife, of scant courtesy and petticoats, in the phrase, "What are ye *haverin'* at."

But readers will properly think it is time to cease talking about talk and come to some of the talkers—to leave a disquisi-

tion on language, and give some more information about the classes of people who employ it. There are two classes of Russians who are apt always to surprise you—that is, if you have formed your conceptions of them beforehand by means of your eyesight viewing print in books instead of watching human beings in reality. I allude to Russian ladies and Russian young men. I know that one of those things which it is not only proper, but true, to say, is that the brightest hope of Russia is in its women. They have a large share of that quality which cannot be too much insisted upon in speaking of their nation—capability. Their bravery, endurance, self-sacrifice, and unselfishness are matters of certainty. Above all, their extraordinary cleverness—a man's daring firmness, combined with a woman's patient tact—is plain to all who read the annals of Russia in books or daily journals. They have, besides, that extraordinary charm, called by most writers in despair of describing it a Slavonic charm, which almost everyone who has ever penned impressions of Russia has expatiated upon. I have, in a former chapter, paid the tribute of truth, and therefore of admiration, to the beauty of the ladies of St. Petersburg. Now, there is no difficulty in believing that all the foregoing admirable qualities repose in the Russian women, and will be found to be there ready when they are wanted. Then, if nothing else, the history of Nihilism alone gives a string of proofs of noble, though misguided, reckless, or even criminal, female heroism. But the strange thing is that a traveller is surprised to have to admit that Russian ladies must possess these undoubted capabilities. Their manners, as he sees them, would certainly never lead him to suspect their existence. Russian ladies are, to use the word a Frenchman has charitably applied to them, "emancipated." In English we must go further, and can only call them by the term "loud." It must be remembered, too, in what I say here, that I only speak of women of irreproachable reputation, and of the higher social classes. That modesty of demeanour which we expect in ladies is replaced by a masculine *abandon*, and a bold freedom of manner which we regard as marking a female individual who is not of the *grand monde*. I need not confine myself here to vague generalities. At dinner, a Russian lady, richly dressed in unimpeachable taste, will put both her elbows on the table, and lean forward over her plate; will pick her teeth, will smoke—not a cigarette, but a small packet of them

—will stare about at everyone, and make loud remarks only too audible for the reputation of her good taste, and will laugh louder than a man while drinking quite a masculine quantity of Mumm and Alasch. I have seen very many instances of this over-forward assurance of manner taking the place of that diffidence or reserve which we delight to see attendant on female grace, though these Russian ladies often possess that grace despite their self-made disfigurements. In Russian private life—I know on ample authority—that the ladies of the house are offensively unrestrained in manners. They will drink a surprising amount of champagne at dinner, then they sit down to cards, play for as heavy stakes as they can manage, smoke all the while, loll about in their chairs—in fact, behave in a manner which by strict censors is only tolerated, and not commended, in men elsewhere. The Russian lady of the type under discussion may be motherly in her home, but she does not appear matronly in society.

Russian ladies—and champagne. I cannot help the connection between the two ideas, I have seen them drink so much of it so often. Having introduced the subject in this truthful, if ungallant fashion, I may give some facts for the edification of the student in the science of comparative gastronomy. It is said that one-fifth of all the champagne manufactured finds its way over Russian palates. Canning declared that the man who said he *liked* dry champagne would say anything, and the Russians seem to agree with him. The champagne in Russia is (except in a few of the clubs and better restaurants) always sweet, and often bad. Strangers who are wise and wish to indulge in sparkling wine at their meals take the cheaper and sounder wine of the country—the “Don” champagne, which has a pleasant but slight flavour of apples in it. I have alluded to matters vinous here because it is characteristic of the country. If you dine at Borel’s, or at the splendid establishments of the Hôtels Demouth or Métropole, in St. Petersburg, it takes a very limited proficiency in arithmetic to count the tables round you where champagne is not being indulged in. It must be remembered that Russian ladies (before leaving the subject) reserve this freedom of manner for Russia. When they travel in the rest of Europe they accommodate themselves to the quieter standard of feminine manners. I have met them in Rome, Athens, Constantinople, and elsewhere, and have noticed no exuberant boldness in their demeanour.

The other class of Russians whom one is often surprised with, and as far as we were concerned pleasantly, is the young men. I must say that I found them, my own contemporaries, the most pleasing members of Russian society I met with. Judging from very many whom I became friends with, I can say that in many ways they are as fine fellows as you can care to have for companions. In the first place, they are well disposed to English people, and in fact they often affect English manners in such things as the cut of their clothes and the shape and colour of their neckties. They have all those agreeable sociable qualities which I have already pointed out as adorning Russians as a whole. They are as a rule, attractive, clean, and well dressed in appearance, and manly and courteous in manner. They will not think less of a stranger's intelligence because he is necessarily ignorant of some shibboleth of manner or speech among them. You are not set down as stupid if you fail to catch the latest local allusion, or to laugh at the newest invented piece of fashionable slang. In this they show a true Russian tolerance, conspicuously absent in many other places. Every one who has mixed with the parallel class of young men in Florence or Berlin, let us say, will know that it has often been quite a reproach to be a little behind the current stream of city gossip, or to be innocently ignorant of the new joke from the latest piece of *stentorello*, or vaudeville opera. The Russian young man (between twenty and thirty) we found to be unusually well educated and well informed; his mind is open, and eager to receive any information. None are better equipped mentally than the young military men. They have to pass very hard examinations, over which I have heard them groaning. I do not know the detailed regulations for these examinations, but they told me that (beyond the operations of warfare, of course, and cognate subjects) they had to pass not only in some modern languages, but through the far more trying ordeal of a test in some one of the important Oriental languages. In view of possible eventualities might not Woolwich and Sandhurst take a hint from this? It goes without saying that most of these young men are extravagant. I have actually seen them spend a rouble and often fifty copecks (half a rouble) for a cigar, where many an Englishman would have been thriftily content with a more modest sixpence. Their least admirable quality I have kept till the last. It is that which a young American in St. Petersburg thus described, to

me in speaking of them, "Well, you see, these fellows, I must say, *aren't* very strong morally."

But they are not alone in this. And here I am necessarily brought to that subject which, in treating of Russia, it is as absolutely necessary to touch on as it would be falsely misleading and one-sided to omit mention of. Travellers will treat it with a not inexcusable pharisaical malice, or with feelings of deep regret, according as they have been unfavourably or favourably impressed by the Russians. But treat it they must, or we shall suspect them of wilful partisanship. It is the subject of all others which it is easiest to speak about, because information is most easily gained about it; you are daily being told about it. Need I say I allude to the Russian morals as they, or rather their absence, are seen in the better social classes. We are not called upon to be censors of Russian morals. No one person could cope with so vast a task. But these sketches would not be worth much if the quality which preponderately distinguishes Russian society from all others in Europe were not pointed out. While it seems ungrateful in a writer to mention the darkest blot on the character of a people among whom he has received much kindness, still it must be remembered the Russians themselves would be the very first to laugh at his having qualms about mentioning a matter on which they show themselves openly indifferent. Viewed from the standpoint of moral purity, Russian society is hopelessly bad and corrupt. It is very easy to write down this sentence, and we know that just in proportion to that facility great care should be taken in writing it. But I confidently assert that anyone who has lived much in the country, or has taken the trouble to acquire much information on this subject, will admit the truth of the fact, and the necessity for telling it. And first I will merely make myself the mouthpiece of what I heard in Russia. I only speak from hearsay, but it is hearsay from scores of witnesses, who all agreed in denouncing this dreadful looseness in Russian social life. We should here explain that we nearly always found Russian reasoning with regard to us to be this—Given a stranger travelling simply and without a large retinue, and who plainly is not travelling on business, then, if he uses a pencil and pocket note-book, he is connected with the Press. If he says he is not, what clearer proof can there be that he is? On one occasion, after all this reasoning had been gone through aloud to me (except, of course, the last argument of the clause,



which was tacit, if uncomplimentary), a Russian said, "I hope you will be able to say something good about us, although we can't ask you to say much about our morals." To give all the testimonies I received would take up pages, so I merely give their result. In Russia it is a very common thing for a gentleman to allow his wife to go away for a trip of some years in Europe with an acquaintance or a neighbouring proprietor. There is a return, however, for this obliging complacency. The traveller leaves his wife at home, and his friend can console his loneliness with her free from any restraint, for "Mrs. Grundy" cannot live in Russia. I am not repeating doubtful scandal; this temporary conjugal exchange is quite customary. When the travelling pair return, then each man "takes his own again," and things go on as they were till next time. A son will live with his mistress under his father's roof. This does not excite much interest, however, for it is a common thing for a landed proprietor to have lived for years on his estate with one who is the mother of his children, but is not his wife either by law or by the rites of the Church. The extraordinary divorce laws of Russia are no doubt responsible for much of this deficient virtue in society. No wife can plead against her husband in divorce. The husband gets a divorce if a wife's improper conduct is sworn to by three witnesses. These witnesses are easily found, and are always false ones. There are men who make a trade of swearing in divorce cases, and reduce consistent perjury to a science. Very often an innocent wife may have her reputation grossly blasted by an unscrupulous husband who wishes to get rid of her. But more often there is collusion between spouses who wish to put the seal of law on a separation, which will ensure them a welcome subsequent freedom of conduct. But it is not only in the higher classes that this lamentable cancer in Russian society is present. The Communes are never tired of crying out about it with reference to the military men. In Russia the recruit marries very young; he is then absent from home for five years or so on his military service, very often in a distant part of the empire. His youthful wife consoles herself meantime with some village swain, and when the soldier comes back he will not naturally recognise the children, and they become a burden on the Commune, impoverishing its already poor resources. This state of things has become so alarmingly general that not long ago the Communes sent in a petition and report to the Government on the

subject. In the towns similar symptoms are present. The Foundling Hospital of St. Petersburg receives about 8000 infants annually, that of Moscow about 14,000. But statistics are comparatively unimportant here. The worst thing is not the number of cases of flagrant, open immorality in society here, though that is bad enough, but the nonchalant way in which their existence is indifferently accepted as a mere matter of course, not calling forth comment, far less reprobation.

These things I have heard, and can only add to them what I saw for myself. As a rule, a writer would be going needlessly out of his way who alluded to such matters, but it is decidedly not so in speaking of Russia. Anything which strikes a stranger as a very prevalent characteristic ought to receive decided mention if his account is to be truly useful. In Russia subjects which, as far as purity of tone in conversation goes, were better not talked about at all, are spoken about openly, and in a mixed company (of strangers, too) without any reserve. This is a delicate subject, and it is as hard to allude to it as it is to comprehend the want of proper feeling shown by so many Russians in this one matter.

We have touched on these corrupt phases of Russian manners as lightly as possible, and by no means for the sake of doing so. It would have been as ridiculous to have omitted mention of them as for a person describing his visit to Rome to pass over St. Peter's and the Colosseum without deigning to remark them. But what can be expected of the upper strata of society when the man who forms its uppermost apex has openly defied all accepted moral laws? You saunter past the Winter Palace. There are the former apartments of the Empress, the late Emperor's lawful wife. Here again, at the other corner, are those formerly inhabited at the same time by the Princess D., his accepted mistress. A ukase has legitimised her children, and she now dazzles the Faubourg St. Germain by her entertainments. Speaking of the so-called morals of Russian "Society" (in the narrower sense of the word), we may well cry out, Morals in Russia! Antelopes browsing on the snowy summits of Mont Blanc! Icebergs floating down the River Murray!

## RUSSIA, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

THE Russian nation is the modern Sphinx. He who can read its riddle can tell us the future not only of Europe but of the whole of the Old World. It is this air of mystery attaching to the people which makes them so extremely interesting to any traveller who can rise above the ebb and flow of the thousand petty trivialities of daily life, and feel, as it were, the pulse of the nation formed by these trivialities. You travel in the rest of Europe and you have not much difficulty in taking an interest in and understanding political movements and the habits of the people which account for them. You cross an invisible line somewhere in the flat plain of Eastern Europe, and you are all at once in a huge empire, where your former studies and received principles and ideas will be of no avail to you. You must begin to think them all out afresh. Here is a people which, with immense latent capacities and powers, does not yet know, as a people, in what way it will make them patent to the rest of an interested world. What they have already done makes it far from idle to be assured that they will yet do greater things. The achievements of Russia in a short time need not be expatiated upon. Let readers refer to the histories of Europe to see what the country was 200 or even 150 years ago, and they will be astounded as they reflect on what it is now, and yet this, the largest of European nations, has its faculties only half developed. This development may often assume forms puzzling to the student of human progress, but they are progressive growths nevertheless.

One point of great importance to be noticed in regard to Russian national characteristics is this:—Russians are in reality a nation of nomads. Like their neighbours, the Tartars with whom they have had so much to do—very often more than the Tartars have relished—they have the restless wandering spirit of the dwellers in the flat, easily traversed steppes. This spirit explains far more of that feverish military ardour which is constantly urging forward and Eastward the Russian Eagles than practical people usually suspect. This wandering spirit is no mere fancied theory. An attentive observer in the

country will see many practical exemplifications of it. Russians' love of travel in Europe is a matter of notoriety. In their own country, as I know well, they are never so happy as when travelling on the railway. They are almost as fond of this mode of motion as are the natives of India. They enjoy a train journey, and always make up their mind to do so. They do not consider it a bore, or waste of time. As I have already said, you constantly hear them remark, "What does it matter to us whether we get to St. Petersburg to-morrow or the day after?" The condition of their country itself does much to foster this roving in the Russians. In the first place, it is so large that there is unlimited scope for a long-timed journey. But, more than this, the fewness of great cities, which I before alluded to, is all-powerful in spurring Russians into necessary motion. Cities are really great brick and mortar cages, keeping men in one place. But they must be visited at some time, and the fewer they are of course the farther the people as a whole must travel to get to them. Do people require further proof of this love of wandering, they may have it in very insignificant acts. A Russian is never so happy as when paying visits. He would far sooner go out and spend the evening in someone else's drawing-room than pass it at home in his own. If you talk to Russians, you will find that they have never that solid sense of their house being their lasting, abiding home in the way an Englishman has. It is merely an abode, and on its outward adornment, at any rate, they consider it superfluous to spend much time or trouble. Whether this nomad tendency will prove an obstacle to Russia, when she has at last reached the limit of what I must term the colossal elasticity of her bounds, is a point for argument; at present, there is no doubt that it plainly exists.

As to that movement, of which it is doubtful whether it removed obstacles to Russia's progress or was itself an obstacle—Nihilism—it is easier, for the present, to speak with certainty. I heard, in the country, what is now being emphatically reiterated and generally believed—that Nihilism is dead for the present. A sojourn in the country led us to suspect strongly that the prevalence of Nihilism had been a good deal exaggerated. The terrifying character of its exploits gave it a notoriety which its extent did not warrant. Russians of all shades and classes, many of whom it would have been ridiculous to suspect of implication

have expressed to me their utter detestation and genuine abhorrence of the Nihilists and their doings. But, what is more important, in general conversation on the subject—to which they will readily enter with a foreign stranger—we found that Nihilism was not alluded to as being the principle of a recognised and dangerous political party, but as a series of separate unconnected atrocities perpetrated by reckless or envious miscreants. Again the great stumbling-block in the way of Nihilism is formed by those very classes whom the Nihilists wish to use as a stepping-stone for their reconstruction of the Russian Government and everything else under the sun—the peasantry, the moujiks. What makes the moujik, again, a stolidly safe bulwark against revolutionary action are two of his distinguishing qualities, ignorance and religious superstition. I can give a striking proof of this. One of the reasons—as I heard in Moscow just about the time of its occurrence—why the coronation of the present Czar was hurried on in spite of terrifying threats, was that the peasantry in the most remote districts were beginning to doubt the sanctity, and hence the political right to rule them, of an uncrowned Czar. What did it matter to them that the Czar was directing all the great offices of State? He had not yet, in the gorgeous cathedral at Moscow, placed the crown of Holy Russia upon his own head, and administered to himself with his own hands the elements of the holy sacrament. When I speak abstractly of the ignorance of the moujiks, readers may naturally fail to picture to their minds what this means. The peasantry are eighty per cent. of the whole population. Hardly any of them can read. You will always see a crowd of them at any railway station. The time-table is as hieroglyphics to them. They just come and sit quietly on the benches in the third-class room till their train happens to pass. The truth is the authorities in Russia have an uncomfortable seat on the horns of a dilemma. The peasantry ought to be educated. The authorities dare not do it for fear of the certain result to themselves; but if they do not, other agitators will attempt to do so, inculcating with the A B C doctrines more dangerous than the crassest ignorance their poison would dispel. Again, it must be remembered that large numbers of the so-called middle classes in Russia desire no change. They are buying and selling and making a good income, and are quite content to go on as at present. Regular residents as they are, they soon get

used to any formal police regulations; they are less irksome than would be the uncertainty to trade caused by a great revolution.

These are clouds, but notwithstanding they are not thick enough to prevent an unprejudiced man seeing the great future Russia has inevitably before her, if not immediately, still far nearer than it is possible to convince the brains of most Western peoples. Many who have thought on the matter support the writer in thinking that it is far from absurd to predict that the Slavs are the great coming race of the future. Those who have heard the Russians, as I have, discuss the ideas of Panslavism with almost irresistible eloquence will appreciate this belief. This hard word, "Panslavism," which is more talked about than understood, designates one of the most seductive national ordeals ever projected in modern times. It has such a theoretic charm that it is impossible for many who understand what it aims at to deny it their sympathy. Panslavism simply means a federation of the Slav race. In the South-East of Europe live millions of people under different dominions whom the Russians claim as brothers in race. Now the Moscow leaders of the Panslavist party—so I was told there—do not desire, or so they say, that all these Slavs should become part and parcel of the Russian dominion; but they do hold that any provinces where they form the great bulk of the population should be independent to do as they like. Their idea is that the Slavs in Russia and the Slavs out of Russia should be placed in a position equivalent to that of the two great English-speaking nations of the world—England and America. To the true Panslavist Russian, as I have seen it well put in a book somewhere, the Eastern question resolves itself into this simply—the progressive emancipation of the Slav race. This accomplished, they say, there is no telling what a future might not await the Panslavist band of peoples united under their great watchword, "Faith in God, and love of the brethren."

There are other notions of this Panslavist party deeply interesting, and which ought to be understood by English people, though they may consider them neither practicable nor sensible. One great Russian cry is, "Beware of the foreigner." In popular everyday life, as I have seen, this is interpreted, "Be jealous of the German." The party in Russia who hold this idea consider that ever since Peter the Great Russia has

been treading in the wrong course. "We ought to have retained our own old institutions," they say, "and let them grow and develop, instead of arbitrarily grafting as much of European civilisation as they would bear on a people who were unfitted for it." There is always a great division in Russia between these two parties, which might possibly widen into a serious rupture. If England had cared to use that same sly, far-seeing astuteness in her diplomatic action as does Russia, she might have found a most potent force ready to her hand by influencing the balance of power between these two internal Russian parties, the Zapadniks or Westerns and the old Russians or Panslavists. St. Petersburg represents one party, and Moscow the other. St. Petersburg lets the light into the windows from the West, and embraces and adapts modern civilisation; Moscow opens her windows more towards the East, and shuts the door in the face of Western liberal progress.

These ideas we may laugh at, but we must pay serious attention to some others held by the more ardent Russian party. The writer firmly believes in them, and, whether readers do or not, the great thing is that they exist to an immense extent in the country. Russia, with her eighty million people, has unrivalled staying power. "*La Russie ne boude pas, elle se recueille.*" This may be paraphrased, "Russia does not sulk in inactivity, she gathers up her forces for a spring." This was the famous maxim of Russia's greatest diplomatist, whose death occurred while I was in St. Petersburg. Russia *must* come forward. She has been advancing with lightning steps for years past; the *vis inertiae* will keep her going still. All great nations have their stages through which they run their course—barbarism, civilisation, over-civilisation, and luxurious decay. Russia is only beginning her race. It is true she has waited, since the Aryan influx, many centuries before she did anything. She has hardly had a fair chance till now, but now her turn has come. Other nations have become effete after a period of strength. Her weakness has been merely that of immaturity. "Perhaps"—here speak the Russians, not the writer—"other nations' methods of government are effete, too. Let us try what the Slavs can do, starting off fresh and untrammelled on new lines." "We have shown our marvellous power of adapting ourselves to different circumstances and peoples, and the principles of Western civilisation to our own ends. We are the

largest European race; we can incorporate ourselves better than any whites with Asiatic races; our combined strength must be great, though as yet we have not been able fairly to use it."

The words in inverted commas are not mine, nor do I fully agree with them; but I have heard almost identical language used in Russia by young men and by old men. If they sound novel to English readers, the greater the pity. English articles, English speeches, English books on Russia are translated in full into Russian in many cases which I have known. We have to depend on short paragraphs in a few papers, admirable as far as they go, condensing in a few lines what Russians say about us. Of their periodical literature all except a very few are entirely ignorant; of their books we hardly ever see an English review, though they half cover the booksellers windows in Berlin streets. It is this want of knowledge of Russia which is every day shown to be such an important difficulty in training English public opinion on any point connected with Russia. You have to rub your eyes when—coming back from Russia—you read sentences in English publications commenting on some Russian matter with an ignorance that will set all St. Petersburg in a grin a day or two afterwards.

But if we are not to understand this great nation, let us be careful not to underrate her. Let us turn over a new leaf. In the museums of Russia I have gazed on exhibits from the farthest points of Central Asia, on effigies of the people there, on photographs of their houses and country, and on a hundred other things betokening close acquaintance with their manners and customs. This means very much. These exhibits have been brought there by Russian soldiers, who have collected them while (with unlimited money at their command) they surveyed the country and worked up information into the form of prospectuses, to induce Russian mercantile companies to develop the industrial resources of these regions. I do not recollect to have seen any such exhibits in Calcutta, Bombay, or anywhere in India. Some people resent Russian action in Central Asia. We are sowing what we reaped. Russian officers have for years back been encouraged to explore Central Asia and master its languages. English officers have constantly been prevented from entering it, and have been snubbed by officialdom when they asked permission to do so. The contiguity of Russia and India in Asia will be a better



guarantee of peace to England than any number of treaties, which Russia disregards in as free and easy a manner as she does her promise to return to you your innocent books she impounds at her frontier. She has not swallowed Austria or Germany yet, though they are her immediate neighbours, and she will find India too hot a mouthful to be comfortable.

But readers will resent being taken all the way to St. Petersburg to hear politics. The excuse is that we are just leaving it. On a bright afternoon (having first carefully got the police permit to leave stamped on our passport) we drive across St. Petersburg to the Berlin station. The streets never looked more brilliantly white, nor did a sledge horse ever seem to remember better to keep up its reputation for Russian trotting. A forty-five hours' journey over the low sandy fields skirting the Baltic (which it seems to covet) brings you to Berl'n. As you step out on to the platform you instinctively feel for your passport. And is it possible the ground is not covered with snow? But there is the bare real dirty earth. And you do not need your passport, and a feeling of relief comes over you. For in Russia you never get *quite* rid of the thought that it is just within the bounds of possibility that something awkward *might* happen to you. This apprehension, however, is not strong enough to mar your enjoyment of a tour among the kindest people who ever tried to make a traveller forget he was a stranger. I am convinced that if other visitors meet the Russians even less than half way they will have similarly pleasant experiences. They will also most likely admit that, whatever may displease them in detail, the Russians, as they are undoubtedly one of the largest of nations, will almost as certainly become one of the greatest of peoples.

FINIS.

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